

Acts #40 “Grace and Power Never Go Unnoticed” *Acts 6:8-15; Matthew 4:18-22; Luke 14:25-35*

It used to be that we didn't talk about politics or religion at the dinner table and that's understandable but if you're a born-again believer in Jesus Christ, you cannot allow yourself to be shut down by anyone regarding the sharing of the good news Gospel of Christ with this lost and dying world.

A fisherman must have a desire to fish and the first principle in witnessing for Jesus Christ is that we must be enthusiastic about the Lord and about seeing people saved.

A fisherman must be equipped to fish with proper tackle and to be a fisher of men, we must know accurate Gospel truth.

A fisherman has to go where the fish are located.

A fisherman must know how to bait a hook because there are different ways of baiting for different varieties of fish and there are many ways to approach people with the Gospel.

A fisherman must keep out of sight; if he doesn't he frightens the fish as even casting a shadow over the water can frighten the fish.

A good fisherman is patient; he never gives up and as such, he will be rewarded.

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When faced with such opposition, we must choose Jesus Christ if we intend to follow Him as true disciples and this is a forgone conclusion for those who've already counted the cost of discipleship.

The plan of God, aka operation grace, was provided for man before man was created and therefore, man cannot earn or deserve this grace because God does the work and man is only the beneficiary.

Under grace, God does the pursuing and man does the benefiting.

Grace is all that God is free to do for man on the basis of the cross.

God is free to express His love through grace and He does this without jeopardizing His essence.

No one can truly give apart from freedom and God gives to us out of total freedom because of the cross.

We know nothing about the background of Stephen but we know one thing about him as a believer: he knew biblical truth and so he had wisdom and power.

The best defense is to know biblical truth and to state it clearly and so, in his defense, Stephen kept on presenting the Word of God to his accusers and the outcome was extremely powerful.

It is not necessary to quote the Bible but one's biblical position must be presented and that's exactly what Stephen did and as a result, the opposition just didn't have any argument for it.

Stephen knew biblical truth, he understood biblical truth and he knew it so well that he could stand up and teach it off the cuff to these people as they brought up various problems and difficulties with regard to their ideas of God, His existence, His plan, the cross, the whole realm of theology.

In other words, Israel's finest cross-examined Stephen very thoroughly and he was able to cope with everything that they threw at him.

In seizing Stephen by violence, this means they decided he was already guilty and so, they beat him up on the way to the Sanhedrin because in their minds, he was already tried, convicted and condemned before he even came to court.

The religious leaders couldn't take their eyes off of Stephen because there was something about him that was absolutely fascinating and different; they saw in Stephen, the face of an angel.

This doesn't mean they knew what angels look like because none of them had ever seen an angel but it has the idea of Exodus 34:30 when the people saw Moses' face when it was animated.

The face of an angel means it displayed great animation or appeared to be full of life way beyond the norm.

But even though they were totally fascinated by the marvelous way that Stephen looked, it didn't keep them from later on, disfiguring that face by pummeling it with stones.