

Festivalis

Week #4: Martyrs

Never forget!

- John 16:18-20 - *“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first... 20 Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.*
- Acts 7:59-60 - *...While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” 60 Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.*

Martyr - **a person who gives his or her life for a cause**

A Follower of Jesus...

...never forgets what is **required**.

- Acts 7 - 2 *To this Stephen replied: “Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Harran... 48 “However, the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands. As the prophet says: 49 “‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be? 50 Has not my hand made all these things?’ 51 “You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! 52 Was 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— 53 you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.”*
- Galatians 2:20 - *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

...never forgets what **Jesus** did.

- Hebrews 12:1-3 - *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

...never forgets what is **in store**.

- Acts 7:54-56 - *54 When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. 55 But 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.”*
- 2 Timothy 4:6-8 - *6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

Points to Ponder

- 1) While the Bible is quiet about most of the life Stephen, his death recorded in Acts 7 speaks volumes. What do you see in Stephen’s death that you most admire? What was Stephen unwilling to forget? Why was Stephen unwilling to compromise? What do you admire most about the way Stephen died?
- 2) It shouldn’t come as a shock to Christians if we will face persecution. Jesus predicted it the night before he died and said “in this world we will face troubles”. Yet why does it seem that many Christians today are shocked that they would be persecuted for their faith? How does knowing what is in store for us, help us deal with the persecutions that we might face?

Homework: James 1:1-18