

Being a 1st Century Church in 2009:

Trust God in the Journey

Wylie United Methodist Church

Pastor Jeff Hatcher – Nov. 8, 2009

Acts 6:8-7:5

8 Now Stephen, **a man full of God's grace and power**, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people. 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. These men began to argue with Stephen, 10 but **they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke**. 11 Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak words of blasphemy 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. 13 **They produced false witnesses**, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. 14 For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us." 15 All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and **they saw that his face was like the face of an angel**. 7:1 Then the high priest asked him, "**Are these charges true?**" 2 To this he 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 Haran. 3 'Leave your country and your people,' God said, 'and go to the land I will show you.' 4 "So he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. After the death of his father, God sent him to this land where you are now living. 5 He gave him no inheritance here, not even a foot of ground. But **God promised him** that he and his descendants after him would possess the land, even though at that time Abraham had no child.

As we become a 1st Century Church, we must...

1. NOT LOOK BACK, BUT FORWARD TO GOD'S PROMISES

Acts 7:39 "But our fathers refused to obey [Moses]. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt."

Acts 7:5 But God promised him that he and his descendants after him would possess the land, even though at that time Abraham had no child.

As we become a 1st Century Church, we must...

2. NOT GRUMBLE, BUT HAVE GRACE

Grace toward One Another

Acts 6:9 Opposition arose...

Acts 6:13 They produced false witnesses...

Acts 6:15... they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

As we become a 1st Century Church, we must...

3. NOT FEAR, BUT HAVE FAITH

Change is scary.

We must Not Fear and Trust in God's Promises:

"I will never leave you or forsake you."

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."

As we become a 1st Century Church, we must...

4. NOT RESIST THE HOLY SPIRIT, BUT FOLLOW GOD'S LEAD

Acts 7:51 "You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!"

Acts 7:55 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.

As we become a 1st Century Church, we must...

5. NOT WAVER, BUT TRUST GOD IN THE JOURNEY

Acts 7:59-60 59 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.