

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

ACTS 4:32-6:15

In the early chapters of Acts we find *divine mathematics* at work. Acts 2:47 tells us, "The Lord **added** to the church daily those who were being saved." Acts 6:7 tells us, "The Word of God spread, and the number of the disciples **multiplied** greatly..."

In Chapter 2 God *adds*. He *multiplies* in chapter 6. And God never **divides**... it's man that does that!

But in Acts 5, God does do some divine **subtraction**. We'll tackle the story of Ananias and Sapphira.

Which reminds me, two pastors were chit-chatting about their churches. One pastor asked, "*Have you had any additions to your church?*" His friend replied, "*No, but we've had a few blessed subtractions.*"

Tonight, we've got a *killer passage* - a real *drop dead Bible Study*. It's a *knock out*. As new believers, Ananias and Sapphira were just *dying* to get into the Bible...

Tonight we're going to discover just how they did it.

Let's pick it up in 4:32, "Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common."

Some people claim the early church practiced a form of communism. But that's not true. Communism is a forced system of sharing and spreading the wealth.

What existed here was “**common-ism**” - a voluntary sharing. Here’s the difference between *communism* and *Christianity*. Communism says, “**what's yours is mine.**” Christianity says, “**what's mine is yours.**”

Verse 33, “**And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.**” I love this description.

Here’s a summary statement of life in the early Church - **great power** and **great grace!** But **great power** and **great grace** are sustained by **great purity.**

Hypocrisy can undermine God’s blessings on a church, as we’re about to see in Chapter 5...

“**Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid *them* at the apostles’ feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.**” The church now numbered over 5000 men - perhaps 15,000 total.

Explosive growth had taken place in a short time.

Many of the new converts were Jewish pilgrims who came to Jerusalem for the feast. They had no place to stay, and nothing to eat, yet they needed to linger for a few weeks to get grounded in their newfound faith.

Wealthier believers came to the rescue. They liquidated their assets to finance these extended stays.

One such man was named “**Joses**”... “**And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated**

Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold *it*, and brought the money and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.”

The OT Law prohibited the tribe of Levi from owning land - their inheritance was the Temple service - but apparently God's Law had been unable to tame the heart of Barnabas. He had insisted on ownership.

But what the Law failed to do, the love of Jesus accomplished. For when Jesus filled his heart, the contents of his wallet wasn't that important any more.

The love of Jesus turns the *greedy* into *givers*. It turns *misers* into *philanthropists*. Here Barnabas bows at the apostles' feet. Later he'll become an apostle.

Chapter 5 begins, “**But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.**”

Here's the All-American couple living in Jerusalem.

In High School, Ananias was the captain of the football team. Sapphira was the homecoming queen.

Now they drive a Mercedes to church every Sunday - dress in designer jeans - live on a golf course in the burbs - even have a Bible study meeting in their home.

This storybook couple was the epitome of respectability - the poster child for conservative, evangelical success. *They even dabbled in real estate.*

And this is what made them feel so uneasy. Their friends at church were getting serious about following Jesus, even to the point of it lightening their wallet.

Here, Mr. and Mrs. Country Club feel threatened. *What happened to moderation?* Believers in Jesus are selling off possessions and pooling their resources...

Ananias and Sapphira liked *playing religion*, but this was real giving and real commitment. They didn't like the encroachment on their lifestyle. *Here was their quandary...* They weren't about to relinquish control of their property, but they didn't want to appear stingy or materialistic. And for this couple "image was everything." They couldn't tolerate looking unspiritual...

So here's what they did, verse 2, they "sold a possession, and he kept back *part* of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet." Realize, God never *required* selling off property and giving it to the church.

This was strictly voluntary.

Neither did God tell Ananias to give *all* the proceeds from the sell of his property. He could've donated a portion - *and said so*. It didn't have to be *all*. Ananias' sin was to *give part*, but then claim to *give all*. He lied!

And he gets busted, "Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself?"

Ananias' giving was designed to *impress people* rather *please God*. It was about *image not integrity*.

Apparently, God could've tolerated their *stinginess and materialism*, but what He couldn't let gain traction was their *hypocrisy*. Here are two people who care more about *looking*

good than being real. It's style over substance. And it's the blight of our modern church.

Peter grills Ananias in verse 4, “While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”

Notice in verse 3 Peter tells Ananias he **lied to the Holy Spirit**. In verse 4 he says Ananias has **lied to God**.

Obviously, the Holy Spirit is God. Here's one of many biblical proof texts for the deity of the Holy Spirit.

“Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last.” Here's a genuine case of being “**slain in the Spirit**.” *And I doubt any of us would want to share this fate.* God struck down a church member named, Ananias, and the man took a final, dying gasp.

“So **great fear** came upon all those who heard these things.” I'm sure it did. “And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried *him* out, and buried *him*.”

In ancient Israel corpses were disposed of as quickly as possible. No need to risk a stench or disease. They didn't even take time to notify the wife or next of kin.

I mentioned earlier that “**great grace**” and “**great power**” were cornerstones in the early church. But there was one more... “**great fear**.” Church in the book of Acts was serious business. Hypocrites who went to church, came home repentant, or in a body bag.

Play at religion - be a poser - *claim to be more than you really be* - and God would take issue with you...

And the neighborhood respected the high standard.

Satan is sneaky. In Acts 4 he tried to silence the church with threats and intimidation. But the disciples dropped to their knees and prayed for boldness.

Now in Acts 5 Satan tries a different method. *Intimidation has failed, so now he tries infiltration.* He tries to water down their faith - dilute their commitment.

The devil tries to contaminate the church with hypocrisy. He takes the attitude, *if he can't beat us, he'll join us.* But Peter looked right through Ananias. He challenged him, *"why has Satan filled your heart?"* Peter saw that Satan was behind Ananias' deception.

Today, weak-kneed saints will question God's severity - *was it really necessary to deal so harshly?*

In fact, if God used the same standards today we'd start singing, *"All to Jesus I surrender..."* - and church-folk would start dropping like flies! Wages would need to bring a fleet of hearses to haul off all the bodies.

Whenever God launches a new movement He uses a flurry of miracles to authenticate its genuineness.

In Acts it's *a rushing mighty wind, flames of fire, the healing of a lame man* - **but then God deals harshly to preserve the work's integrity...** Remember when God brought Israel into the Promised Land he worked miraculously at Jericho,

but the next battle was Ai, where Achan's sin cost them a devastating defeat.

God judged Achan to rid the camp of hidden sin.

This is the pattern in Acts. God wants the Church then and now, to realize the priority He places on purity and integrity. Spiritual pride, and deceit, and two-faced spirituality are sins that short-circuit God's work.

Verse 7, "Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened."

She'd probably been shopping at the mall. But she's in on the duplicity. Verse 2 calls her a co-conspirator.

"And Peter answered her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?" She said, "Yes, for so much."

Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband *are* at the door, and they will carry you out." Notice her sin – *she "test(ed) the Spirit of the Lord"* – she challenged God's omniscience and discernment. The fact she had lied and thought she could get away with it was a slap in the Spirit's face. You can't hide the truth from God.

I read of restaurant in New York City that built its business on hypocrisy. Husbands bring their wives, and boyfriends their girlfriends. Couples get seated and are handed a menu. But what the girl doesn't know is the prices in her menu were triple the cost of the prices in the man's menu... So when he

leaned in, and tells her to order whatever she wants, she is deceptively impressed. Yet this is dangerous ruse!

For when the lady finds out the truth it can backfire!

In the case of Ananias and Sapphira God knew what was up from the start. He saw their motive. Their cover up was doomed. Sapphira should've come clean.

Verse 10, “Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying *her* out, buried *her* by her husband.” The golden couple were buried in adjacent plots. They died in shame as a warning to the Church.

“So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things. And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon’s Porch.” You better believe that after Ananias and Sapphira the Church was on its best behavior.

“Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly.” For a time, this slowed the growth rate, *but it intensified the respect*. Grace was still shown. But folks realized God takes faith seriously.

The Church in all eras needs to be careful about dumbing down the concept of holiness. When we lower the bar we lose the public’s respect. In every era the Church needs to foster “*great grace*” and “*great fear*.”

And it didn't take long for the Church to grow again. Verse 14, "And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women..."

The Law of the Vineyard applies to churches - as to grapes. Rather than *more foliage* the vinedresser is after *more fruit*, so he prunes the sucker shoots that bleed off valuable sap. The same applies to church life.

At times a church has folks who hang on with a hypocritical, or contentious, or bitter spirit. There comes a point when God has to lop off the bad apples.

After Mr. and Mrs. Ananias "*dropped out*" a new surge of folks came in. The Church continued to grow.

"So that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed." There was a surge *of people*, and *of power!*

We learn in Acts that **purity and power go hand-in-hand**. As soon as God rids the camp of sin, the camp erupts with more people and power. Miracles occur... The sick are healed... Demoniacs are delivered...

And this passage shows how far Peter has come. A few months earlier Pete was sitting in the shadows, weeping bitterly that he denied Jesus, afraid of arrest.

Now he's so associated with the living Lord people have connected his shadow with supernatural healing.

I don't believe there was anything miraculous about Peter's shadow, but people were healed because it triggered their faith. It was a point of release for faith.

Faith can often be nebulous and vague until it has a focus. This is why we practice the laying on of hands when we pray. It's a rallying point for faith. Peter's shadow brought substance to the people's faith. And not surprisingly people were healed... *by faith.*

Verse 17 “Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees) (remember the Pharisees were Jesus' enemies, the Sadducees tormented the Church), and they were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison.”

This was a different form of the laying on of hands.

“But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, “Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.” Notice, the angel defines Christianity as “*this life.*”

Christianity is more than a set of doctrines. Following Jesus is a *lifestyle* - a mindset by which to live your life.

“And when they heard *that*, they entered the temple early in the morning and taught.” They didn't beat around the bush. The angel said stand in the temple and preach. The next morning they reported for duty.

Here's a quiz for you geography buffs - “What's the world's largest nation?” Answer: “**Procrastination.**”

More people live there than in any other state. When God gives orders don't *hesitate*... don't *procrastinate*... just *activate!* The disciples entered the next morning.

“But the high priest and those with him came and called the council together, with all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.” The Jewish hierarchy send down to the prison for Peter, but he's in the Temple preaching the Gospel - *courtesy of the angel's early release program.*

“But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, saying, “Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!”

Now when the high priest, the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be. So one came and told them, saying, “Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!” *Surprise!* “Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council.” This council was the Jewish Sanhedrin, the highest court in Judaism. It was their Supreme Court.

“And the high priest asked them, saying, “Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine...”

What a compliment to Peter and the apostles.

They'd filled the city with the Gospel. This should be our goal to flood our city with the good news of Jesus.

They also accuse Peter of "intend(ing) to bring this Man's blood on us!" What a short memory they have.

The High Priest forgot his own words when he asked Pilate to release Barrabas. He said of Jesus, "His blood be on us and on our children." Peter isn't going to let him forget what he asked for that ominous day.

"But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men..."

Later in his letter, Peter writes, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man... for this is the will of God..."

Peter was no anarchist. He believed that submission to the governing authorities is a Christian virtue. If we can't submit to human government - an authority we can see - then how can we submit to God's government - an authority that's invisible?

Peter believed in paying taxes, and driving the speed limit. He obeyed civil authority, as long as its demands didn't conflict with God's will. But when that happened, he had a choice - *obey man or God?* And Peter says that's no choice at all - It's always better to obey God!

And Peter renews his preaching efforts with the Sanhedrin themselves... Verse 30 "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree." Wow, Peter is full of boldness!

"Him God has exalted to His right hand *to be* Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also *is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.*” The greater their threats the braver Peter became. He broke their laws before he left the room. Every time he preached his life was threatened, but Peter preached fearlessly. *“When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them.”*

“Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while.” He wants to speak privately...

Jewish sources tell us Rabbi Gamaliel was the preeminent scholar of his day. His contemporaries called him, *“the beauty of the Law.”* At his funeral it was said, *“the glory of the Law ceased and purity and abstinence died...”* Gamaliel was well respected by all the Jews, both fellow Pharisees and rival Sadducees.

As a side note, according to Acts 22:3 one of his most brilliant students was a young Jew from Tarsus, a man named **Saul** - who later was renamed **Paul**.

This Gamaliel *“said to them: “Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about 400, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed.”* We know little about

either Theudas or Judas, but that was Gamaliel's point. They created a stir, yet it was short-lived. It died out.

“And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing, but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it - lest you even be found to fight against God.” If it's of man it will go the way of Theudas and Judas, but if it's of God you can't defeat it.

And why would you want to? Who really wants to fight with God? Gamaliel gave the Sanhedrin some wise and sage advice... In fact, I wonder what Gamaliel would tell us today - 2000 years later - now that Christianity has *transformed cultures, and birthed civilizations, and effected countless generations, and spread to the four corners of the globe?* I'm sure he'd conclude this Jesus-movement was of God after all!

Verse 40, “And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.” Rather than execute the apostles, they roughed them up - had them flogged.

It was one more attempt to shut them up. And you got to love the reaction of the followers of Jesus...

No apostolic pity parties here! “So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.

And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.”

I love how Winston Churchill defined a fanatic. He said, "A fanatic is someone who *can't* change his mind and *won't* change the subject." That was the apostles!

How do you stop guys who interpret *a beating* as a *blessing*? Throw them in prison and they praise God. Shame them and they take it as an honor. Try to silence them, and they grow more public and vocal.

The disciples recalled Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven..." How do you defeat people who live for heaven's reward? *You don't!*

Chapter 6, "Now in those days, when *the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.*" Remember the divine math... God **adds** - He **multiplies** - even **subtracts** - but never **divides**.

It's the members of the church that stir up division.

I've heard of churches splitting over the color of the carpet, or whether a guitar or a piano led worship, or the location of the water cooler. Lot's of trivial stuff.

Obviously, there are issues worth fighting for, but how often have churches divided over picky, petty matters? Often, superficial stuff takes us off the rails.

Which brings us to Acts 6, *the first church squabble*.
The Church at Jerusalem had *a breech over bread*.

The dispute erupted over whether the *Greek widows* were getting a fair share of the *groceries*. This conflict was over a *minor matter*, but as these situations often do, it had escalated to *major proportions*.

The word "*Hellenist*" refers to Jews who'd embraced Greek language and culture. Hebrew purists resented these people. They considered them compromisers.

There was a tension between these two groups.

So when there seemed to be inequities in the distribution of the church's benevolence the Hellenists were quick to call foul and accuse the Hebrews of discrimination. It was an ugly, volatile situation with the potential of permanently thwarting the *rapid expansion and righteous harmony* of the infant Church... *Disaster was averted because of some wise leadership...*

Verse 2, "*Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables."*

The complaint was trivial, but the underlying problem was far more serious. The apostles were stretched too thin. They were being asked to do it all. They were hammering out sound doctrine - and fighting with the Sanhedrin - and discipling new believers - *now they're suppose to wait on tables?* It was just too much...

And pastors today face the same dilemma.

Everybody wants me to be there... every time there's a meeting, or wedding, or funeral, or special event, or a

member heads to the hospital, or a teenager gets into trouble, or you have a squabble with your spouse...

People want their email answered... phone call taken... invitation accepted... *Pastor, can spare me a few minutes of your time...* **And oh yea, we need two quality Bible Studies every week! That's a given!**

I'm not complaining. I'm just saying it can be a lot. This is why I won't even mention the burn out rate for pastors. It's astronomical. If a pastor is going to survive he has to learn to say "no" - to *prioritize and delegate.*

And this is what the apostles do in Acts 6...

They realize they're the paper jam - they are the bottleneck in the life of the church. And if they don't get other people involved they're going to hinder the work they're trying to advance. Their priority is clear. *"It is not desirable that we... leave the word of God..."*

Realize, the ministry of the Word should be every pastor's top priority. The Bible calls itself *a fire, a food, a sword, a hammer.* It's God's revelation to man.

Without it we'd be lost, defenseless, and hopeless...

Duffy Daugherty, long time coach of the Michigan State Spartans, once told his team, *"Men, when you're playing for the national championship, its not a matter of life and death. It's more important than that."*

That's a sky-high priority, yet that's how every pastor should feel about teaching the Scriptures. From week to week other needs can seem more *urgent* than preparing another Bible

study, but in God's wisdom nothing is more vital for the health of the church.

The apostles knew this, and decided to delegate.

Verse 3 *“Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”*

This whole matter was about the *“daily distribution.”*

The Greek word for *“distribution”* is *“diakonos”* - the same word as *“deacon.”* That's why these seven men were considered the Church's first deacons.

It's interesting to note the simple leadership structure that existed in the early Church... The apostles or elders *led and fed* the flock, while the deacons *served*.

Elders were overseers. Deacons designated doers.

Elders took care of *spiritual needs*. Deacons handle *physical needs*. - Elders *oversaw*. Deacons *undergird*.

Also notice the spiritual qualifications given to the men who passed out lunch to widows. They had to be, *“of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom.”*

Realize, **the church has no menial jobs**. Every person we serve is bought by the blood of Jesus. Everyone should be treated with love and wisdom.

Churches today often have the wrong focus when it comes to church government. They're rigid in regards to structure, but they compromise on the character of the men who occupy

that structure. *We got it backwards.* The NT is flexible regarding structure, but unwavering when it comes to a leader's character.

Verse 5 records the church's reaction to the apostle's delegation. *"And the saying pleased the whole multitude."* In other words a major schism was averted.

"And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip (And the next two chapters are about Stephen and Philip), *Prochorus* (a long time assistant to John, who died a martyr's death), *Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch...*" This Nicolas may've become a bad apple.

Some teachers identify *"Nicolas"* with the heresy spoken of in Revelation 2-3, *"the sin of the Nicolaitans."* *"Nico"* means *"ruler"* and *"laos"* means *"people."* Thus, the *Nicolaitans* practiced a bullying type of leadership. They loved to rule over people.

Could it be that *"Nicolas"* rebelled against his role as a deacon - and wanted power and authority. Rather than remain a servant this Nicolas became a tyrant.

One other point - later, elders are appointed by fellow elders. But here deacons are selected by the church.

Peter said, *"seek out from among you..."*

In light of that, it's interesting that all seven deacons chosen had Greek or Hellenistic names. Remember the problem - the Hellenistic widows felt slighted...

Thus, the church in Jerusalem chose servants that the perceived victims would be able to trust. Obviously, what was important in this church was a sense of unity.

According to verse 6 the deacons were “set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.” They began their ministry with prayer.

“Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem...”

The apostles’ decision to prioritize God’s Word and delegate these simpler tasks unclogged the bottleneck.

The apostles’ decision not to do it all, but pass on ministry to others, spawned a new season of growth.

“And a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.” In first century Israel 8000 priests served in the Temple. The Jewish priesthood was limited to a select group - one family - the descendants of Aaron.

But in Christ everyone gets in on the priestly action. Jesus has delegated the priestly authority. In Christ every believer has a direct connection with God. We can all go before God’s throne. We all are His priests, not just one family. OT priests are no longer needed.

Perhaps this resonated among the Jewish priests. They knew Judaism’s limits. They also saw how the Temple veil was torn when Jesus died. It was a sign. In Christ, the separation between God and man is over. Every believer in Jesus has the access of a priest.

Verse 8, “And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.”

It didn't take long for Stephen to go from *table waiter* to *miracle worker*. Apparently, God rewarded Stephen's faithful service with a broader and bolder ministry. He was faithful in a little and God rewarded him with more.

“Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen.” The “*Freedmen*” were Jews whose fathers had been Roman slaves, who had won their freedom.

Apparently, they formed their own synagogue. And for some reason they had a beef with Stephen.

“And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. Then they secretly induced men to say, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” They hired slanderers to conjure up fake news and falsely accuse Stephen.

“And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon *him*, seized him, and brought *him* to the council.” (that is, the Sanhedrin).

“They also set up false witnesses who said, “This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us. And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.”

Spurgeon use to say to his students, "Men, when you teach on heaven, let there always be a glow on your face, a gleam in your eye, and a grin on your lips... When you teach on hell, your normal face will do." Apparently, Stephen had a certain glow about him.

It reminds me of Exodus 34 when Moses spent time in the presence of God a visible sheen, or sparkle, or luster lingered and radiated from his countenance.

Call it the *divine shine*, the *Mo glow!* Evidently, God's glory had a comparable effect on Stephen's face.

The similarity between Moses and Stephen should have tipped off the Jews that rather than contradict Moses, Stephen was acting in harmony with him.

We'll study Stephen's testimony in Acts 7...