

Acts 6:8 – 7:20 How to be Confident without being Arrogant Mar 1 2009

Intro: Opportunities to kneel at the altar at the end of the service.

1. Stephen's Steady Confidence.

1a. Character of Soul. Acts 6:8 (HCSB)

⁸ Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people.

1b. Channel of the Spirit and His Wisdom. Acts 6:10 (HCSB)

¹⁰ But they were unable to stand up against the wisdom and the Spirit by whom he spoke.

1c. Countenance that Shone. Acts 6:15 (HCSB)

¹⁵ And all who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at him and saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

1d. Command of the Scriptures. Acts 7:2-3 (HCSB)

² “Brothers and fathers,” he said, “listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he settled in Haran, ³ and said to him: Get out of your country and away from your relatives, and come to the land that I will show you.

Acts 7:40 (HCSB)

⁴⁰ They told Aaron: Make us gods who will go before us. As for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we don't know what's become of him.

(vss 1 through 44 are beautiful, concise, summary of God's revelation in the OT)

1e. Christlike in Suffering. Acts 7:59-60 (HCSB)

⁵⁹ They were stoning Stephen as he called out: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!”

⁶⁰ Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin!” And saying this, he fell asleep.

2. The Sanhedrin’s Stubborn Arrogance.

2a. Religious Place of beauty. (Herod’s Temple) Acts 7:44-50 (HCSB)

⁴⁴ “Our forefathers had the tabernacle of the testimony in the desert, just as He who spoke to Moses commanded him to make it according to the pattern he had seen.

⁴⁵ Our forefathers in turn received it and with Joshua brought it in when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before our fathers, until the days of David.

⁴⁶ He found favor in God’s sight and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob.

⁴⁷ But it was Solomon who built Him a house.

⁴⁸ However, the Most High does not dwell in sanctuaries made with hands, as the prophet says:

⁴⁹ Heaven is My throne, and earth My footstool. What sort of house will you build for Me? says the Lord, or what is My resting place?

⁵⁰ Did not My hand make all these things?

2b. Resistant, Prideful Posturing. Acts 7:51 (HCSB)

⁵¹ “You stiff-necked people with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are always resisting the Holy Spirit; as your forefathers did, so do you.

2c. Right practices without a right heart. Acts 7:51 (HCSB)

⁵¹ “You stiff-necked people with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are always resisting the Holy Spirit; as your forefathers did, so do you.

(Proud of Heritage and Parentage)

(Sometimes just pretend to have right practices) Acts 7:53 (HCSB)

⁵³ You received the law under the direction of angels and yet have not kept it.”

2d. React to a Prophetic or corrective message with Persecution. Acts 7:52 (HCSB)

⁵² Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They even killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become.

3. Your Ongoing Relationship with Christ Makes the Difference.

Philippians 3:3-9 (HCSB)

³ For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God, boast in Christ Jesus, and do not put confidence in the flesh—

⁴ although I once had confidence in the flesh too. If anyone else thinks he has grounds for confidence in the flesh, I have more:

⁵ circumcised the eighth day; of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee;

⁶ as to zeal, persecuting the church; as to the righteousness that is in the law, blameless.

⁷ But everything that was a gain to me, I have considered to be a loss because of Christ.

⁸ More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of Him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them filth, so that I may gain Christ

⁹ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ—the righteousness from God based on faith.

Galatians 6:14 (HCSB)

¹⁴ But as for me, I will never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Acts 7:52-56 (HCSB)

⁵² Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They even killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become.

⁵³ You received the law under the direction of angels and yet have not kept it.”

⁵⁴ When they heard these things, they were enraged in their hearts and gnashed their teeth at him.

⁵⁵ But Stephen, filled by the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven. He saw God’s glory, with Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and he said,

⁵⁶ “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”

Invitation: The humility required in coming to Christ and in following Christ. Put aside arrogance, humble yourself, find true confidence in Christ.