



The Chapel  
February 2, 2025  
Dave Gustavsen

Week 5: Prepare to Suffer  
Scripture: Acts 7:51-8:1

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### 1. OPEN IN PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

- Have a group member pray, invite the Holy Spirit to lead, and fill your time together.

### 2. GETTING STARTED: (10 MINUTES)

- Question: Share a time when you or someone you know faced backlash or rejection for speaking the truth or addressing a difficult issue. How did you or that person handle the response?

### 3. READ ACTS 7:51-8:1 TOGETHER (5 MINUTES)

- Ask one or two group members to read the passage aloud.

### 4. DISCUSS (30 MINUTES)

#### Understanding the Passage:

- In Acts 7:51, Stephen boldly confronted the religious leaders with a truth that they refused to accept. Despite their hostility, verses 55-60 show him standing firm in his faith, accepting the consequences, and even showing grace towards his attackers. What do you think enabled Stephen to respond with such courage, conviction, and forgiveness? How can we apply this to our own lives when we face rejection for speaking truth?
- The same power that enabled Stephen to endure suffering for Christ is available to us today. How can we actively cultivate or strengthen it in our own lives, especially when sharing and/or facing opposition for our faith?
- What challenges or pressures make it difficult for us to live out our faith authentically in different settings? How can we overcome these obstacles and remain true to Christ in every area of our lives?
- In Acts 7:55, Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at His right hand, even as he was being stoned. How does this vision give us perspective on suffering for Christ? Do you believe the reward outweighs the cost? Why or why not?

#### Applying the Message:

- Acts 8:1 shows how the scattering of believers through persecution spread the gospel. Who in your life might be impacted by how you handle your current struggles? What is one way you can demonstrate faith or share hope with them this week?

## 5. LIVE IT OUT: "BE MY WITNESS THIS WEEK" (10 MINUTES)

- Identify a situation where you may face opposition, criticism, or difficulty for your faith.
  - **Pray for strength:** Start each day this week asking God to give you the courage to stand firm and the grace to respond like Stephen — with love, truth, and forgiveness.
  - **Take a step:** When you encounter tension or opposition, commit to responding with Christlike love, avoiding anger or defensiveness.
  - **Reflect:** At the end of the week, journal or share with the group how you saw God strengthen you through those moments.

## 6. CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

- Take a few moments to silently reflect on Stephen's example of faith, courage, and grace, even in the face of suffering. Then, pray, asking God for the grace and power to stand firm and respond with His love, no matter what we face this week.