

# A Faith Filled Heart

by Keith Malcomson

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*This sermon is about the life of Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, who faced persecution and death with unwavering faith. It emphasizes the importance of being filled with faith, wisdom, power, and truth, even in the midst of trials and opposition. The message challenges believers to stand firm in their faith, trust in God's power, and be willing to endure persecution for the sake of the Gospel.*

**Scripture:** Acts 6:5, Acts 6:8, Acts 7:55, Acts 7:59, Acts 7:60, Acts 8:1, Acts 8:4, Acts 8:5, Acts 8:26, Acts 8:39

**Topics:** "Faith in Trials", "Endurance in Persecution"

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## Description

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## Transcript

And in going to Acts chapter 6, I also want you to go to Hebrews 11. And we're gonna, I'm only, I'm gonna touch on both of these things. I hope you're here for the day because I've taken two messages and put them together.

And maybe we'll take an hour's break and then come back for another three hours. I don't know. But we are coming to this message of faith-filled heart.

I believe God is searching for a faith-filled heart. I'm just going to quote these scriptures, not read them fully. Acts chapter 6 and verse 5. Acts chapter 6 and verse 5. And they choose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.

Then chapter 6, verse 8. And Stephen, full of faith and power. Then Acts chapter 11, verse 24. For he was a good man, speaking about Barnabas.

He was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. And much people were added unto the Lord. Here you have three verses in the book of Acts speaking about a man, men who were full of faith.

My message here, a faith-filled heart. Let's pray together. Father, I thank you for the word of God.

And Father, Lord God, you delight in faith. You take pleasure in faith. You do nothing apart from faith.

You are searching for faith. And it's impossible to please you, O God, to bring pleasure to your heart apart from faith. We honor you this morning by believing you.

Lord God, we bring pleasure to your heart. Lord God, when we stand before you with faith. And Father, I pray, will you stir up faith in every single heart in this room.

It's by faith that we are justified, saved and born again. It's by faith, O God, that we walk and live out this Christian life. Lord God, it's by faith that every promise of this book is made real in our life.

And here this morning, I pray quicken us, enliven us. Lord God, even as these believers listen to the word of God this morning. Help them by your mighty Holy Spirit to mix faith with the word of God.

That would change them. That would open their eyes. That would quicken their inner man.

Lord God, I thank you for a living faith. A real faith that the world cannot destroy. That hell cannot quench.

A faith that sees you and hears you. And Lord God trusts in you. We bless you this morning in Jesus' mighty name.

Amen. My message, a faith-filled heart. We have just read in Acts chapter 6, two verses speaking about a man called Stephen.

And it says of him, he was full of faith. Literally full of faith. We read again in Acts 11 of another man, Barnabas.

And he also was full of faith. I believe this is a real experience. Yet all that have faith are not filled with faith.

All who believe in Christ, who have been saved by faith, justified by faith, certainly are not filled with faith. When you go to the Bible, you read of Jesus Christ rebuking the disciples, the apostles, and saying, oh you of little faith. They had faith.

They were justified by faith. It was a saving faith. It was a faith that would get them to heaven.

And yet it was a little faith. With that little faith, they are rebuked by Christ himself. And he says, I could do nothing here because of your lack of faith.

Your faith is so puny, so small. There's very little I could do. But yet there is a real experience of being full of faith.

The Bible actually teaches that. It says in Hebrews 11 and verse 6, but without faith it is impossible to please him that is God. Do you realize here, it is utterly impossible to please God.

You cannot please God without faith. Your good works will not do that. Your right words will not do that.

Your moral lifestyle will not do that. Do you know what pleases God? Is faith. God actually looks for faith.

And when he finds it, it pleases his heart. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, that he exists, and that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him. And so we see the vitalness of faith all through the Bible.

Often in the Psalms, it talks about don't lean on your own understanding, but trust in the Lord with all of your heart. To have faith means you trust or you lean or you rely upon God. Faith is a dynamic thing.

You are saved by faith. You are sanctified by faith. You work out your salvation by faith.

This crucified life works in you by faith. Every promise of the Bible becomes yours by faith. It is by faith that everything is accomplished in the Bible.

But listen, faith is absolutely essential from Genesis to Revelation in every area of your Christian life. But Jesus says in Luke chapter 18 and verse 8, Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, returns, appears in his glory, shall he find faith on the earth? Almost all Christians make a mistake on this verse and misinterpret it. They don't understand it.

Many preachers do the same. Most preachers do the same. Do you know here it's not all about saving faith.

I hear mature Christians all the time say, when Jesus comes back, will he find anyone with faith? It's not saying that. You need to read this verse in context. He's not saying, will he find anyone who has faith to believe in him or who is really born again? It doesn't say that.

Do you realize why Jesus said, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? Do you know he just told the parable of the woman going daily and pleading her cause day and night, day and night, day and night. And he says, so will the elect who plead avenge me of mine enemies morning and night, morning and night. Where are the elect? Do you know what he's saying? It is a certain kind of faith.

When Jesus comes back again, will he find this kind of faith? Not saving faith that gets you born again, but a certain kind of faith that is laying hold of God saying, avenge me of my enemies, avenge me of my enemies. Do you know the last days are going to be so dark that many who are born again, oh yes, they're saved by faith. But they are, it's going to be hard to find Christians who morning and night, morning and night, day after day are saying, God, avenge me of my enemies.

They're going to lose confidence in prayer. They're going to lose their intensity. They're going to lose their persistence.

And yet they're really born again. But all of this is going to die down. That is going to mark the last stage.

And so Jesus says, when the son of man comes, when he returns, shall he find this kind of faith? Not everyone has this kind of faith. Every Christian that's saved by faith doesn't have this certain kind of faith. I've got two halves to my message this morning.

The first half is, what is faith? The second half is about a faith-filled man, Stephen, that we've already dealt with. And so I want to give to you here this morning, what is faith? Let's understand what faith is. Then let's see an example of how a faith-filled life or a heart filled with faith actually operates.

First of all, what is faith? Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 1. A very important scripture here this morning. Hebrews chapter 11, verse 1. You ought to know this, understand it. You need to spend time in this verse if you're to understand faith.

What does it say? Now, faith is. You cannot understand faith if you don't understand this verse. Now, faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Many people live by presumption. And presumption is not faith. There is a big difference.

And if you can't tell the difference between presumption, much of the church of this hour, they presume to believe and yet nothing happens. Absolutely nothing happens. They presume to have something they do not have.

What is the difference between faith and presumption? Presumption is belief without evidence. Where you believe, you believe in miracles. You believe God can do anything.

You're believing he's going to do something, but you have no evidence and you have no proof that he's going to do it. You're presuming upon God. You remember when the devil tempted Jesus and took him to the top of the temple and said, throw yourself off.

For doesn't the Bible say, doesn't it say in Deuteronomy, that he will give his angels charge over you and you won't dash your foot. Why don't you cast yourself off? Do you know why Christ wouldn't do that? And he walked down by the stairs. It took more real faith to walk down by the stairs than to jump off the corner of the temple.

You see, if he jumped off, it would be presumption. It would be presumption. You see, you don't test or attempt or presume on the promises of God.

If he would have jumped, that's presumption. To walk down by the steps is an act of faith. I don't need that promise to operate my life.

I'd be testing the heart of God. So there is a difference. Presumption is belief without any evidence or proof.

It has no foundation or substance within it. Presumption is blind. It has no eyes of faith.

Presumption is trust, confidence and rest in nothing whatsoever. And that's what a lot of faith in this are. The faith message.

You know how I know the prosperity preachers have no faith? And they proclaim and pride themselves. They say it's a faith prosperity message. We have faith and we have prosperity.

Our money shows that we have faith. I know they don't have faith. You know why? They wouldn't have to beg for money like that.

George Muller had faith. He never once made known his needs on the men. I know Hudson Taylor had faith.

He put a thousand missionaries in China and he never begged for money one single time. So when you hear a preacher actually begging for money, that's presumption. You know, we got a message yesterday.

A lady said she knows of a pastor and at certain church. And that church was donated a beautiful chandelier of half a million dollars. And her friend is saying, isn't this wonderful what the Lord is doing? Isn't this a great blessing? Doesn't it show faith? Do you realize we are in the crisis hour of this generation? Everything is about to collapse.

And you've got a church that is boasting and it's half a million dollars chandelier. That is not faith. That utterly isn't.

That is mere presumption. It's a terrible thing. You see, real faith is solidly based on the word of God.

It has evidence for how it speaks and how it thinks. The word of God. That's the source of all real faith.

Faith is God-centered, not man-centered. Presumption is centered in man. Man's ideas, man's desires, man's longings.

But real faith is centered upon God himself. Presumption fills you with pride. That's what it actually does.

It makes you arrogant. It makes you a blasé over the promises of God. But faith doesn't do that.

Faith humbles you at the very feet of God. Presumption, you try to force God to do your will. But faith actually makes you willing to obey God's will and do his word.

There's a big difference between faith and presumption. But let's look at this first. What is faith? Now, faith is the substance.

I want you to see that this is vital. What is faith? How are you going to understand what it is to have a heart filled with faith and to operate by faith if you don't know what it is? You might think your emotions are faith. Or your thoughts are faith.

Or your presumption is faith. Or some ideas of a mega preacher is faith. And you could be deceived.

Here it says in this verse, faith is the substance. Do you know what that word substance means? Faith substantiates. And I'm going to explain this for you.

Or it gives substance to our hope. There's something solid in it. It is the ground of our confidence and assurance.

What is faith? It is substance. It is a firm persuasion. It is the ground of our expectation.

It is that which is placed under you. And this is what it means in the original. And this is what the Latin word for substance actually means.

It means to have something placed under your feet in order to stand on it. Or it means a foundation. So what is faith? It is a foundation.

That's what faith does. Faith gives you a solid foundation to stand on. It is something to stand upon when hell comes against you.

And the waves roar. And everything is dark around you. And you have to stand against a lion or a bear or a giant.

That's where you need a solid foundation more than presumption. It is something to stand solidly upon. It convinces me of things that are invisible.

Things that I cannot hear with the natural ear. Things I cannot see with my natural eye. Things that I cannot touch with my hand.

It makes me utterly convinced of invisible things. I know God created all things. How do I know? It is faith.

Not presumption. Not blind faith. Faith actually opens your eyes to see an invisible unseen world and God himself.

It convinces me of things that are future as if they are real right now. It convinces me of things that are eternal that shall never come to an end. Faith gives reality to my hope.

And hope would be a terrible thing of torment if you didn't have faith. Faith is the substance of hope. And without faith, hope is nothing.

Faith always has a reason or a basis for its strong conviction on what it believes. What does it say here? Faith is the substance of things hoped for. You see, hope is always in the future.

It is a future earnest desire or expectation. It is a desire to see the promises of God fulfilled in my life today, here and now. So hope sees in the distance.

I see the promise of God. I know what I desire. I'm expecting those things.

But you know what faith does to hope? It gives a solid foundation in order to stand on to reach forward with hope. Hope always looks forward, never back. What you have isn't hope if you're always looking back.

Hope has to look forward. Hope is future. Hope is what you're desiring for, but you cannot see with the naked eye.

It is a patient waiting upon God for what He has promised and what He has covenanted. Hope is, and listen to this, hope is the glove that stretches out. Faith is the hand that goes inside the glove, and you couldn't even grab the promises of God unless you had a real faith like that.

And so faith is the hand in the glove of hope that gives substance needed to grab the promises of God, future things, eternal things, invisible things, and to lay a hold of God Himself, to bring God right into your situation now. God is outside of time. He is eternal.

He is everlasting. But by faith, through hope, we bring God right into our situation, right into our church this morning. Without faith, hope is empty, like an empty glove.

Why have hope when you've got no confidence you will attain? What's the point? Hope would become a torment, eternal life, heaven, glory, reward, the person of Christ, seeing God in all His majesty, standing at the throne of God, seeing the angelic beings. All of this would be in vain if all you had was hope and yet not faith. But without faith, hope has no direction.

It really doesn't. It says in Hebrews 11, 33, and we've dealt with this the past two Friday nights in our prayer meeting, who through faith subdued kingdoms. Joshua did not defeat cities and kingdoms by the sword or great armies.

Neither did Saul or David or any of the great warriors of the Old Testament. It was an act of faith. If you ever realize this, it'll change your entire Christian life.

Who through faith, they subdued kingdoms, they wrought righteousness. You want to do some great act of righteousness and you go, I don't have the ability. I don't have the holiness.

No, your problem's faith. You say, but I want to be so righteous. I want to live so right.

I want to do something for God. Your problem is faith. If you can't attain, the desire is there.

The hope is there. The conviction is there. What you need is actually faith.

You wrought righteousness by faith and obtained promises and stopped the mouse of lands. All the promises of the Bible are obtained by faith. They are invisible.

They are eternal. They are spiritual, but you obtain them by faith. Faith reaches out through hope and grabs a hold of it.

And so it says here, faith is the substance of things hoped for. It is the very substance of all that you're hoping for. All the things that you say you're hoping for right now, do you know what gives it a solidity, a foundation to stand on? Proof and evidence and security and assurance and confidence.

You know what it is? It is faith and that is not presumption. It goes further and says, faith is the evidence of things not seen. The evidence, what is faith? It is the evidence.

What does the word evidence mean? It means proof. In other words, you're convinced. You become persuaded.

How do you know there is a God? I think your faith is a blind faith. Isn't faith a blind faith? Isn't that what sinners think? Well, if you're going to believe in God, our faith is a blind faith. You just have to hope.

You know, I met people in the church and they claim to be born again. Their faith say, well, you just have to believe. You just have to hope, don't you? Well, none of us really know.

You know what? You're not born again. Do you realize that faith is the evidence? Where you get real faith coming into the heart, you have been given evidence. Faith gives you evidence.

It gives you proof. It gives you solid evidence. So you become utterly convinced.

That's why I'm a very convinced man. It's not because I worked that up or studied hard or know a lot of facts. It's got nothing to do with that.

Faith actually is the evidence of things not seen. It is a conviction. I am utterly convicted of unseen things.

Brother Keith, have you seen them with your eye? Never. Have you had Jesus come to you physically? Never. Have you heard the audible voice of God? Never.

But I couldn't be any more convinced. Some people pray for angels and say, Lord, let an angel feather fall down and I'll believe you. You're missing faith.

You don't understand what faith actually is. This word evidence can also mean reproof. It reproofs unbelief.

It reproofs skepticism. It reproofs wrong ideas. And so this evidence, what is faith? It is the evidence of things not seen.

That which gives proof or evidence that those things which you cannot see, that they are real. It convinces you. It utterly persuades you.

It presents to you such strong evidence that it is hard to disbelieve. Do you know what? I could make myself disbelieve in God or his promises or in heaven or in hell or in eternity or in angels or in Bible prophecy or in what is about to happen in our world. You can't even convince me because all the darts of my mind, all the fiery darts of hell cannot convince me.

You know, sometimes I'll stand there and I go, I could not make myself believe this isn't true. I couldn't force myself. I couldn't trick myself.

I am so persuaded of that invisible world. Say, Brother Keith, I wish I had it. Do you know what comes by faith? Faith opens the eyes of your understanding.

Faith demonstrates to you. It reveals to you. It brings things unseen into the scene with eyes of faith.

You begin to hear the voice of God with ears of faith, with the heart of faith. Faith is founded upon evidence. I do not believe in blind faith.

Without evidence, there's nothing to believe in. There's nothing for faith to rest on. You know, there's a big difference in someone worried and someone resting.

If you have faith, you rest. Do you know, I know all of the judgments and the troubles and the chaos that's coming in our world, and I warn about it. It's very serious, but I'm not disturbed this morning.

I am resting because I have faith in God. Do you realize a famine could strike? A world collapse of the economy can strike. And if you have this kind of faith, you'll walk through it at peace when others are disturbed.

We need this again in a very, very real way. Faith stands upon solid evidence. You need evidence.

You can't just tell someone you've got to believe because it's true. You've got to give them evidence. When you're evangelizing someone, give them evidence.

Don't say you just have to believe in this. That's rubbish. Faith needs evidence.

It needs something to rest upon. That's why a sinner, I'm persuading them. Do you know what I'm doing right now in this pulpit? I'm persuading you.

I'm giving you evidence about faith. Why am I saying it's not just blind, airy fairy faith that comes and goes or the prosperity gospel faith? They do not have faith. You know, I know what it is to be in a car and not have any money in your wallet.

And I'm driving, I'm an hour from the ferry port and I don't have any money for it. And I packed my bags and I'm in there and I've got no hope of money coming in. I'm talking about 20 years ago.

And I go, if somehow God doesn't do a miracle, I'm not going to have it. At the very last hour, someone rushed over to me. I'm sitting in my car and said, I forgot to give you this, an envelope.

Couldn't wait to get around the corner. I stopped, made sure no one's looking, opened that envelope. It was the exact amount, the price of that ferry.

Nobody knew. Now I've got a problem because I'm in Scotland, no money for fuel. And the devil's telling me, what a fool you are.

You're going to run out. You'll be in the center of Glasgow and you'll run out of fuel. You'll have no money and you're going to look like the biggest fool.

Well, I just spoke to the devil. I said, I vowed before God, before myself and to you devil, if I run out of fuel in the middle of Glasgow and you know I'll do this, you know me. I'm going to get out of the car, not try and push it in.

I'm going to stand in that car and I'm going to preach in the middle of Glasgow and they'll be beeping their horns. I'm going to preach the gospel and you know that I'll do this. You see, faith is built upon evidence.

You cannot exercise faith without evidence. This is why people struggle with faith. They're trying to believe things and they have no evidence.

They're not persuaded. They haven't spent time in the word of God. Where does faith come from? Faith cometh from hearing the word of God.

Isn't that right? Faith cometh. Do you lack faith for something for healing or deliverance or provision or some other area? You're praying for your unsaved loved ones and you have no faith. You actually cannot believe God's going to save them.

Do you know what? You need to go back to that foundation, that substance again. You're trying to believe. You're praying for things that you actually can't believe.

You think faith is just throwing it upon God. You actually do not believe. You're defeated before you pray the prayer.

You've got to go back and lay the foundation of faith one more time and begin to pray and believe God. Faith brings you into contact with the unseen world. We have five senses in our natural human body.

Hearing, smelling, seeing, tasting and touching. But you also have spiritual sight. I can see God this morning.

I can hear God this morning. I can touch God this morning. I can smell God this morning.

All these same things and yet it's by faith. Evidence also means to rebuke or to reprove unbelief, skepticism, doubts, impossibilities, fears. Do you have fears this morning? Do you realize faith when you go back to faith? Get faith.

Get in a place of faith. Let the word of God bring in evidence to stir your faith. Build a faith.

It's terrible when faith is undermined. Remember what I said to you? It was three weeks ago on the Friday. I was preparing for the prayer meeting and as I sat there, God challenged me on this, that I was repeating prayers without believing them.

God really challenged me and challenged me. Don't you even pray for Candice tonight until you re-establish your confidence. What's the point of praying if you don't have confidence? Since I had to get back to a solid place again before I can pray in faith and believe that God heals cancer and believe it's his will to heal and that he's able to do that in this hour and time.

I've got to have the evidence to rebuke the fear. Evidence rebukes the fear. Faith gives evidence in a very real way.

That's the first half. What is faith? This is faith. One verse.

Study it. Memorize it. Understand it.

If you understand this one verse, it'll radically change what you do. Faith isn't some mystical feeling, something that just flows through and you don't understand. You begin to understand.

If you own a car and you don't put fuel in it and you don't put oil in it, and that's the basics, and yet you keep driving and driving and driving and you get on it and go, if you're like me, you'll phone Brother Paul. Brother Paul, what's wrong with my car? It won't start. Maybe it's a starter motor.

And he'll start asking me a few questions and then he'll go, this is probably a really stupid question. How much fuel's in it? Fuel? What do you mean? No, I'm trying to turn the key. It's not working.

Did you put fuel in it? Oh, that doesn't matter. Your problem isn't the key or the engine. Your problem is fuel.

No, let's go further. Your problem is neglect and ignorance. Oh, but I've got faith it's going to go without fuel.

Brother Paul will be saying, let's just sit down for a minute and have a little talk about mechanics. Do you know it's the same in spiritual things? All the time you see people having problems and you go, let's just sit down and have a little talk. Part two, a faith-filled man.

What did we read at the start? Acts chapter six, verse five. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. Chapter six, verse eight.

And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. When you go to Acts chapter six, what you have is the context of the 12 apostles are preaching and teaching the church. Thousands are getting born again.

These are the leaders, the men of God, preaching, leading, deciding, directing a whole movement within a city. But a problem arises. There's a whole segment of the church that are Greek-speaking widows.

That's their culture. They're Jews, now they're born again, but their culture is Greek and they speak Greek and now they're living in Jerusalem and they're widows, they have no husband, they have no one to provide for them and you've got a problem because the 12 apostles who are preaching to them and who are administering the word of God and laying hands on them, praying them, are the same people who hand out the bread to these ladies and there's a fight amongst the widows. You see, the Greek-speaking widows are saying, the local Jewish widows are getting more from Peter and John.

I'm watching, I can see it. And then Peter and John get up to preach and their ears are closed, they go, not listening to him. He gives her more bread than he gives to me.

You've got a crisis. I'm coming at a faith-filled heart here, okay? This is the context of God speaking about Stephen, a man filled with faith. This is the context of it.

And so what do you have? The apostles say, choose out seven men from among you and let us let you choose them. You're gonna carry this. Real democracy.

Do you know you only get voting in the Bible in this one place? You only get democracy in this one place. There's no voting and preachers in the Bible. You don't find it.

Not one single verse, not even anything remote. Men of God appoint other preachers to preach and lead and to serve God. It's not a democracy.

We don't vote here. I'd have been voted out a thousand times, I'm sure. But they didn't get rid of the preacher.

Now all of them have left. Okay, so we're okay. We're about to come to a crisis worldwide.

We've been in a crisis. We're in a crisis. It's only the beginning.

I'm telling you, we need a faith-filled heart. If ever we need it, we need it for a crisis. We need it in the body of Christ.

We need men and women who are going to be filled with faith. I told you one and a half years ago, a financial crisis, the like of which our world has never seen, is coming. I warned you a year and a half ago.

One and a half years ago, I said, start stocking up basic food at home. I heard a preacher 10 years ago say, do that. I said, it's not the time.

20 years ago, a famous preacher said, stockpile food, everything's going to crash. I told all my friends, it's not going to happen yet. A year and a half ago, I said, now is the time.

Never once have I told anyone to stockpile food. But do you know what? A year and a half ago. Do you know this week, the problem they have in America? No baby formula.

There's a crisis. Look at the oil prices. Look at the bread prices.

Everything. There's only the beginning. You better not delay to the end of the year.

We are going to see worldwide crisis. I'm glad I warned you a year and a half ago. You know, we're the church.

We ought to know what's going on. But most do not in this hour. We need to be prepared.

And so here, listen carefully. A faith-filled man. One of the seven men or deacons that were chosen was a man called Stephen.

Let me give you several things about him. Because I want you to understand what a faith-filled man looks like or what a faith-filled woman looks like. Seven men were chosen for feeding the widows.

Notice they didn't choose seven women. Notice you're looking for a certain... Oh sure, just put anyone on the job. Then you're going to get in trouble.

Because if these seven men don't do their job, those 12 apostles are going to get dragged out of the prayer closet. They're going to not have time to study. If these seven men cannot do the job, you'd better make sure they're filled with faith and they're filled with the Holy Spirit of God.

And they have wisdom. You need a lot of wisdom when you're dealing with widows. Handing out bread.

It's very, very spiritual. You know what? We're going to need faith in this church for the days ahead. I'm giving you an answer here in this message.

There's several things here. Let me point the first thing out about Stephen. A man filled with faith.

Isn't it remarkable how it says he's filled with faith? This word filled means filled up to the brim. No more room for anything else. Wouldn't that be wonderful to be so filled with faith? It's possible, you know, the Bible talks about it.

There's an experience, not just saved by faith, but you're so filled. Where is faith? It's in the heart. Faith is resident in the heart.

So it is a heart, the inner man, who you are, how you function. Your heart is filled with faith. If it's filled with faith, no fear can get in there.

No doubt can get in there. There's a difference between having faith and being filled with faith. Nothing can move you.

The word filled here actually is speaking about influence. If a man is filled with alcohol, filled to the brim, do you know what it means? He's under the influence and the control of the alcohol. My granddad used to say, when the drink goes in, the wit goes out.

And there's no truer word said. Because as soon as the alcohol comes in, it is alcohol controlling your eyes and your mind and your mouth assuredly, and even your steps. That's why I can identify a drunk man.

I can see a man, even if he can hold his drink. I go, that man's drunk. If I hear him speak, if I watch him, if I listen to him, if I see him walk, I go, that's a man under the influence of alcohol.

And so to be filled with something means you're influenced or you're controlled by that thing. If your heart is filled with faith, then do you know what? That faith actually controls how you say, how you hear, how you speak, how you walk. Oh, to be a faithful man.

When you go to the Bible, you see people time and time again, filled with something. Every man has his heart filled with something. See all of you in this room, all of you have your heart filled with something.

Every single one of you in this room, from the youngest to the oldest. The thing is, what is filling your heart? When you come to the Bible, you find individuals sometimes filled with anger, or bitterness, or lust, or jealousy, or faith. It says in Acts 5, verse 3, about Ananias and Sapphira, who went into the church and they lied.

They're in the midst of revival, and they're telling lies about the land and the money. Listen to what Peter says. Why has Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost and to keep back part of the land? Do you realize here is a good Christian member of a church in revival, and Satan has filled their heart to lie.

Satan has so filled their heart. What does a liar who has a heart filled with lies, directly from Satan look like? Oh, they're giving big amounts of money to the church. They're attending every service.

They're looking to be brought into ministry. But if you've seen in their heart, their heart is filled by Satan with lies. They're not getting drunk.

They're not sleeping around. They're not an atheist. They're not in the bars.

They're in the church on Sunday morning. And yet their heart is filled with lies. Your heart is going to be filled with something.

It says in Acts 5, verse 17, then the high priest rose up when they're being persecuted, and he spoke against them, and all the sect of the Sadducees were there, and they were filled with indignation. They were filled and driven with indignation, anger against the Christians. In Acts chapter 13, we read about Paul and Cyprus.

Sorry, in Acts 13, 45, it talks about the Jews and the multitude. They were filled with envy. In Acts chapter 13 and verse 10, it speaks about a man challenging Paul and Barnabas, trying to turn the top politician away from hearing the gospel.

You know what it says? Paul says, you're full of subtlety. You're a wicked man. In the previous verse, it says Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Is it any wonder? Do you know who Stephen was? He was a man filled with faith. But notice this. In verse 3, verse 5, and verse 55, it talks about Stephen being a man filled with the Spirit of God.

In verse 3, it says he was filled with wisdom. In verse 8, he was filled with power. And then in verse 5 and 8, he's filled with faith.

I believe this goes together. A man or a woman filled with faith. I mean, when their confidence is in the Word of God, they're going to be filled with wisdom and the Spirit.

And with power. This was a man abundantly filled with many spiritual things. What are you filled with? Do you know a real filling of the Holy Spirit comes through faith? Have you been filled with the Holy Spirit? Are you overflowing with the Holy Spirit? Oh, I have the Spirit indwelling me.

I didn't ask that. In my Bible, lots of men and women who have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them for salvation, they're not filled. They need to be filled and repeatedly filled.

Be ye filled with the Spirit of God. Not with wine wherein there's excess. But be filled with the Holy Spirit of God.

Do you realize a man who is filled with faith will be filled with other things. He'll be filled with the Holy Spirit of God. You see, faith brings the Spirit of God.

The Spirit of God finds it easy to fill you when you have faith. That's why we have meetings and teaching and preaching and gatherings together and coming aside. Because then your faith gets back on the Lord.

And then he can fill you with the Holy Spirit again. You can be filled with the wisdom of God. I mean, imagine being filled with wisdom.

But you need faith. Because that wisdom isn't of you. How do you get it? You get it by faith.

Or what about power? Power to do things you can't do. You're gonna have to have faith. Filled with the influence of faith.

Stephen was a remarkable man. He was a man filled with faith. And because he was filled with faith, he was filled with many other things.

The second thing about him, he was a man of honest report. Look at verse 3. It says he was a man of honest report. Look you out amongst you, men of honest report.

It's the first thing. Men filled with the Spirit. Men who have wisdom.

To have an honest report means a good report or a good reputation. Stephen was a man who before everyone had a reputation. If you asked anyone in the church, what do you think of Stephen? Man, he's a good man.

Remember, Barnabas has said he was a good man. This word honest report means well-witnessed to. In other words, how people speak about you.

How people who know you and know spiritual things, what they would say about you. He's an honest man. He has a good report.

He has a reputation. This man, he not only had faith, but he had a good testimony. I'm tired of people misusing faith.

They say they have faith. I believe revival's coming. They have no reputation.

They have no testimony. They have no good report. And when you separate real faith, I mean the function of faith to believe God.

When you say, I have faith in God, and yet you don't have a good testimony. You haven't lived consistently and uprightly in the body of Christ. You don't have faith.

Do you realize how much faith it takes to raise up a testimony that endures through years? Do you know how hard that is? That over a 10-year period, 20 or 30 years, you have a good testimony. I look for men in the body of Christ who have a good testimony and women who have a good testimony. It used to be in the church, you'd go in a local church and there's people there 30, 40, 50, 60 years saved with a good testimony.

Now in the church, we say, oh no, you can have faith, but you don't need a testimony. You can be a sinner. You could curse.

You could blaspheme, but you have faith in God. Something terribly wrong with this hour. You see, don't separate faith from faithfulness.

Do you know in the New Testament, it's the same Greek word. When we think of faith, we go, someone's believing. But in the Bible, to have faith means you're faithful.

It puts a solidity in you because that's what faith is. It's substance. It's solidness.

It's settledness. And so if you really have faith, you are faithful, reliable, trustworthy, consistent, and it can be seen. When's the last time you heard someone in a church and say, okay, who do you think has faith in the church? How are you going to define that? Do you know one of the marks is, find someone who's faithful, consistent, and they're in it for the long term, and they're faithful in every trial, year after year.

They have faith. We don't think like this. We separate having faith to do some great thing, or in the prayer meeting, Lord, I know you're going to send revival.

Few of them we've met along the way who used to pray the heavens down in the prayer meeting. Now they're out drinking and sleeping around. Oh, it seemed like they had faith, but no faithfulness.

You know what? That faith was not real. It was momentary. Third of all, he was a man of wisdom.

Stephen, because of the faith he had, he had a heart filled with faith. You know what he was filled with as well? Wisdom. What is wisdom? The ability to know what to do, when to do it, what to say.

Remember he's dealing with widows, Greek and Jewish widows from Jerusalem, and some from Cyprus. I'm going to need the wisdom of God. Natural wisdom won't get you through this.

And if you get stuck between two fighting women, if you've ever had that experience, you never forget it the rest of your days. Oh, I'm not talking about two sinners. I'm talking about two women in the church who both are convinced that they're right.

Sorry, ladies. I'm not getting the ladies this morning, honestly. It's just in the text.

That's my excuse. But here you have a man filled with wisdom. Do you know this wisdom was practical wisdom? It wasn't supernatural wisdom for some miracle or some insight to scripture.

It was basic practical wisdom. This man that had a heart filled with faith was filled with wisdom. Now I know how to reconcile them two and get them sitting, eating a meal together, smiling at each other, encouraging each other.

That's going to take the wisdom of God. And they don't know you've done it. And you're working on either end of this.

They won't even sit near each other. By the time wisdom does its job, they're sitting next to each other, laying hands on each other, praying for each other, encouraging each other. Saying, how about popping around to my house for a meal? Going to take a lot of wisdom.

This practical wisdom, Stephen was going to have a practical job. The business, the needs, the practical things so that an apostle can stay in that pulpit and preach and stay in his closet and pray and doesn't have to worry about this. We need men and women of wisdom in this hour because we're about to hit the greatest crisis in our world.

We are going into turmoil in our world and confusion. We need a church filled with wisdom. But do you know what? It's got to come out of faith.

It's the ability to know how to apply wisdom in a situation. The know-how in your words, your action, your timing with all people. Fourth of all, he was a man of power.

First say, and Stephen, full of faith, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. The word power here, he was a man of power. See, we jump to this.

Man of power, great preacher. Now what about the rest? He's serving. He's got faith that makes him a servant to practical things.

That is faith. A man who's actually there serving the widows, that is faith. You are seeing a display of faith.

It didn't put him in a pulpit. It put him in the midst of a row with the ability to cure it. That's a man of faith.

But he's also a man of power. And don't diminish that. You see, that's where the charismatics and the whole reform form circles get it wrong.

They both take this apart. They both go to extremes. The charismatic go one way and the reform lot go the other way.

And we've got to come right down the biblical line. I disagree with the reform circles on many areas and with the charismatics and anyone else in between who departs from scripture. Do you know what? He was a man of power.

The word power is the word dunamis. After the Holy Ghost has come upon you, you shall receive power. Oh, that's only for the first church because it was immature and it was in childhood state.

So that was the baby stage and we're at the mature stage. Are you kidding me? Oh, that which is perfect has come and now we're mature. Are you kidding me? Do you know what a reformed Bible college in Northern Ireland, the most pristine, best one, maybe in Europe.

And I had a friend who went there. It was a reformed Calvinistic Bible college. And he went to one side of the corridor and he would go into prophecy teachings, new mythology.

And he sat there in the class and they went one Corinthians chapter 13. When that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part should be done away with. It's talking about Jesus coming back.

That which is perfect when we see him face to face. Then they crossed the corridor after lunchtime, went in the other class and it's on heresies and cults and false teachings. And they say, see those Pentecostals and those people that talk, believe that miracles and signs and wonders are for today.

And they turn them to one Corinthians 13, the very same text that they're just being told on the same day was Jesus coming back. And they said, when that which is perfect has come is the Bible at the end of the first century and tongues and prophecy and miracles are done away with. The first student comes out of class and there's a reformed Bible college and they're using the same text of scripture and two different ways.

Do you know here it talks about dunamis. Stephen, he not only was full of faith, but he had power. The word dunamis means a supernatural ability of the Holy Ghost that you could never accomplish.

And it says here that he did certain things, wonders. He did great wonders and miracles. The word did means to wrought.

Stephen actually done it. Oh, it's the Holy Spirit does it. I don't work a miracle.

Actually that's biblically wrong. I can't do it unless the Holy Spirit does it. But it says somebody has to be a vessel through whom a miracle comes.

It doesn't just float down. God uses people. He always has done that in a very, very real way.

And the first thing it says, this power was manifest as great wonders. That means things that all do that you can't explain. Things that are beyond the natural ability of the church.

Do you know Stephen here, the man handed out bread to widows. He also through faith could operate in real power that wasn't natural. Couldn't be explained.

Couldn't be done away with naturally. When you read the word wonder, it's always connected to either signs or to miracles. And that's what it is here.

Great wonders, not just wonders, great wonders and miracles among the people. Stephen was working miracles. Miracles are different than healing.

It's not just saying he was praying for the sick and they're getting healed. It doesn't say that. Miracles is different than healing.

Do you know what a miracle is? Feeding 5,000 people. That's a miracle. Walking on water.

That's a miracle. It's not a healing. It's a miracle.

So here's a man that was actually being used in the body of Christ. Oh, he must be a great apostle. No.

Do you realize this is the first time we see miracles operating through anyone else in the church who wasn't an apostle. Before this, it was always the 12 working the miracles or the 70 before Jesus left. But during the operation of the church of Jerusalem, there's the first man operating in miracles who wasn't an apostle.

Wasn't an official preacher. You know what he is? He's a deacon in the church handing out bread to widows who are fighting together. And so we see a man of faith.

You cannot do this. Saints of God, you need faith if God's power is going to operate. And if miracles are going to operate and God is going to intervene, you actually are going to have to have faith.

Fifth of all, he was a man who spoke God's truth. It says at the end of chapter six, as he went about doing these things, that a group of Jews rose up in the community disputing with Stephen. They home in on him.

He becomes a target. A man filled with faith will become a target. You see like God has vessels, so does the devil.

And he'll use religious people to become his instruments and his hand to attack real faith. It says they began to dispute with Stephen and they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke. He was speaking with such wisdom.

He confounded them. Look at this man, a man who spoke the truth of God. Do you know how I know he was a man of faith? He spoke the word of God with real wisdom and real clarity.

Do you know he got in so much trouble? He got taken before the high priest and the Sanhedrin and all the religious leaders of the city. And he was going to stand trial. The entire chapter seven, following this, you have Stephen standing trial in a religious court and it's for his life.

If you get condemned as guilty, you're going to get stoned to death. And you have Stephen in this court. Listen, in Acts chapter seven, when Stephen defends himself before the Sanhedrin, he quotes seven different Old Testament scriptures and he refers to between 40 to 50 other scriptures.

Do you know when he's standing there, he is a man filled with the word of God. He is a man who knows the word of God. How do I know he's a man of faith? He knows the word of God.

Do you see here, he didn't get into debating and arguing. He gives them the word of God. He preaches the truth to them.

He deals with their heart. He penetrates to their spirit. He is a man of God's truth.

He can't be anything else than a man of truth. Number six, he's a persecuted man. In chapter six, verse 15, he's standing in front of the council and they're accusing him with false accusers.

How would you react if people are getting paid to falsely accuse you? How would you react? How would it affect you? Do you know I know if you're filled with faith, I know how you'll react. Because you're going to live a certain way and speak a certain way. Someone who's filled with anger, I know what they're going to do.

And with resentment and vengeance and bitterness, I know what you'll... See, you can come in here and love people who love you. If I stand on your foot, I'll find out what is in you. I'll find out.

People can sit here and while they like you, but as soon as you do one thing, God help me, that young guy who wanted to do everything in this church, until he sat down and started talking, what about a girl for me? And I told him that was God's job, not mine. And the last email he sent to me, he was slapping over me with the nicest thing. I should frame it one of these days and put it in the wall.

And as soon as I told him it was God's job, and I've got no ability to do that, and I'm not giving him a girl. He got so better, he turned on us. Went to a church down the road, got put on the Lord's table, and then got a girl pregnant.

I could give you a hundred of these. A persecuted man. How did Stephen, a man filled, when he is in the court being accused, do you know what it says? And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

All of his accusers are looking at him, false accusers, stirring up strife, persecuting him. And as they looked on his face, no resentment or bitterness, he has got the appearance of an angel. And they can see it.

There's something about his composure. You know what? He's a man of faith. The righteous are as bold as a lion.

I don't care what hell throws at me. Let real faith be in me. I don't need to prepare for the future in some senses.

Whatever's going to happen in our world, and it's going to get very rough. You know what? If I'm filled with faith, I can meet it head on with the appearance of an angel. To have the appearance or the face of an angel means that you've got a face of vindication from heaven.

That your face is a warning to the skeptics. You've got an angel face of serenity. They stirred up the people, falsely accused them, set witnesses with false accusations.

But what did he give them? He didn't argue or defend himself. Do not defend yourself. Preach the word.

Don't get into arguments and debates and justification. Preach the word of God. Not personal defense, not accusation against them.

You set up false accusers. He didn't even say that. You know what he does? He preaches the word of God.

I'm talking about a man filled with faith. This is what he'll do. I'm talking about a woman filled with faith.

This is what she'll do. And then saints of God, it says in verse 54, chapter 754, after he finished, and what a sermon he preaches. What a sermon.

It says they gnashed on him with their teeth. Verse 55, but he being full of the Holy Ghost, three things he does. He looks up steadfastly into heaven.

He fixes his gaze. He's preached. He's done the will of God.

He's being persecuted. They hate him and want to kill him. He steadfastly looked to heaven.

Do you know what faith will do? It'll make you look into heaven. Have you ever looked into heaven? Do you realize faith can open your eyes that you could look outside the realms of earth, beyond the universe, into heaven itself? Stephen is a faith-filled man who at a crisis hour, the hottest, most dangerous moment in his entire life, he's steadfast. He's not looking at them.

He's not looking at himself. He's not looking at the world. He is looking up steadfastly to heaven.

He gets a vision of heaven. And it says he saw the glory of God. The glory manifest.

Can you see the glory? Do you know by faith, God can show you his glory in the hottest hour when everything is against you? But then third of all, it says that and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. He saw Jesus at the hottest hour. Only faith can do that for you.

Only faith can do that. And then finally it says in chapter 50, sorry, chapter seven, verse 59, and they stoned Stephen. What are you going to do to your enemies? Do you know I can tell if faith fills your heart by how you respond to your enemies.

If you're filled with faith, it's going to affect everything. And they stoned Stephen. These men hated him.

Can you imagine the aggression behind each one of those stones? Only once in my life did I have one young guy who was about nine years old, get a stone. I've still got the scar on my head. And he took it for a joke and he threw it at me.

Only one small stone by one small guy. And I've carried the scar with on my forehead. But the aggression and the anger, what's he going to do? Stephen calling upon God.

And saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down. He wasn't cast down or thrown down.

He deliberately kneeled down. And he cried with a loud voice, not a weak voice. Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.

And when he had said it, he fell asleep. He's a faith-filled man. That's what a faith-filled man looks like when he comes to die.

He goes, this is the time. I'm going home. It's over.

I've seen Jesus. Hold on, Lord. I'll be there in a moment.

Seventh and lastly, he was a soul-winning man. See the verse before him, Dan. Do you know what it says? And they cast him out of the city and stoned him.

And the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul, Saul of Tarsus, who had later become Paul, the apostle. Stephen would not see this convert. He didn't know who an angry crowd would be a convert very soon.

Stephen was a dynamic, remarkable man, filled with doctrine, filled with power, filled with signs and wonders, filled with the wisdom of God. If he hadn't have been killed, he would have been the apostle Paul of the first century. But do you know what? His life was cut off immediately at a young age, filled with gift and an ability.

He died a martyr's death. In the will of God. But standing at the crowd, keeping all of the coats, was a man who hated him, hated Christ, didn't believe in anything, and was filled with bitterness in his heart.

And he heard Stephen's prayer. And he heard Stephen's sermon. And he seen Stephen's death.

And this would become one of the greatest converts of the body of Christ. Do you know how you respond when the mob is at you and your enemies are at you? There's somebody who's watching you who could change the whole face of the church and by your response could steer them in a direction. You know who picked up the mantle of Stephen? It was the apostle Paul.

And I believe Paul was a man filled with faith and filled with wisdom and filled with the spirit and filled with power and filled with Christ and filled with the word of God. You know the answer. We're heading for dark days.

Your family, this church, our nation, our world, we are heading into the last days. This is the hour. And you know what? We're going to have to have saints arise again.

Some listen to me who are in other countries. They're going to have to rise up. I don't care how.

We need to recreate leadership in the church and gifted ministry in the church and deacons in the church and apostles in the church. And we need to start again for this last hour of history and to see revival in this last hour of time. Will you stand with me here? Lord Jesus, we praise you.

We bless you. My God, I pray quicken our hearts here right now, right this moment. My God, we know how dynamic a faith that comes from you.

Lord God, a faith that has substance and that gives evidence to hope. Lord God, I'm asking of you in Jesus' mighty name, will you come with power? Will you raise up a faith-filled church and it's going to believe you for revival and it's going to believe you for a harvest of soul and it's going to believe you for an apostle Paul to be raised up. My God, we pray, oh God, that in this last generation, Lord God, that you're going to move sovereignly by raising up vessels that are filled with faith again, filled with your Holy Spirit, filled with wisdom.

And Lord God, they're going to be filled with all the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We know that you're searching for a people, you're seeking for a people, right now a people that are going to be used in this very last hour of time. And oh God, we don't want to miss out on this in Jesus' name, Jesus.

Saints of God, where are you? Just for a moment, let's bow our heads. You and the Lord, where are you this morning? It's a hot morning, beautiful day outside and yet our world stands on the edge of crisis. Are you like that church with a half million dollar chandelier, thinking that's faith? When our world is about to be plunged into tragedy, do you know how many people are going to die in this? Those who are claiming that they're going to preserve this world and look out for the oppressed, it's going to be devastating.

Utterly devastating. Already in our shops, the most basic commodities, they're going. And this hasn't even started yet.

Tesco this week, Cannes went on and said, what was it, the bread products? Toiletries. Toiletries. You can't get them, Tesco.

This week on them, all of it, not accessible. And we are brinking, how are you going to play your part in the next months and year? What's good? We're going home very, very soon, very soon. But there's the last chapter, the last part on what's your life going to amount to.

It could be a martyr in this room. It could be a deacon in this room. It could be someone who's going to rise up and preach the word of God.

You're going to play your part. How are you going to play it? How are you going to finish this race? Oh, but I've done things before. Yeah, but this is the end of the race.

This is the part that matters now. It's all over. It's the most decisive hour that you're ever going to live in.

And we're the church of this. Just you and the Lord, you can come and kneel. You can just stand where you are.

Just meet with them, talk to them. Ask them to move you up. Oh, Jesus.

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