

# Week of Meetings 02

by Morgan Bartlett

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the significance of Stephen's example in the early Church.*

**Duration:** 49:16

**Scripture:** Habakkuk 2:4, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:7-8, Acts 6:1-7

**Topics:** "Bible Conference"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of letting go of worldly possessions and focusing on gaining what cannot be lost, which is a relationship with God. He references a quote by Jim Elliott, stating that those who are willing to lose what they cannot keep are not fools but wise. The speaker also discusses the story of Lot from the Old Testament, highlighting how even though he was considered a righteous man, he lacked power and influence because his family did not believe in him. The sermon concludes by emphasizing the secret to power, which is maintaining a constant connection and contact with God.

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## Transcript

Now I wonder if we can read together this evening from the Book of the F into the sixth chapter of the Book of the F. So good to see you here again this evening. And I do pray much that God will meet the need of us all in this congregation this evening. Now let us read together the sixth chapter of the F. And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their biddles were neglected in the daily ministrations.

It's never a good sign when you hear of murmuring in the Church of God. This is trouble inside, and it's a bad thing when there is any evidence of it in any assembly in any Church of God. Trouble within is more dangerous than trouble without.

But may God save all of us here this evening from having any part whatsoever in murmuring within. Verse two, Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Wherefore brethren, look ye out among you certain men of honest report, full of holy ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this distance, that we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

Prayer first, ministry of the word second. It's the prayer that gives power to the preaching. Prayer is more important than the preaching.

And the same please the whole multitude, and they choose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Pecoras, and Lycanon, and Timon, and Phamidius, and Nicholas the proselyte of Antioch, whom they set before the apostles. When they prayed, they laid their hands on them. They identified themselves with him.

He laid on their head. And there were the body of Christ, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly. It sounds like a revival, doesn't it? It was a revival.

Thus said, and again in the word of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faithful. And Stephen, full of grace, that's reading from the Revised Blessing. We've already read that he was full of faith.

Revised Blessing reads, and Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the like of Timaeus, and Tyrrhenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Phoenicia, and Asia. This speaks in good Stephen.

They were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, and said, Of false witnesses, which said, This man seeth not to speak blasphemous words against his holy place in the law.

For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy his place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us. And all that sat in the council looked instead fastly on him, and saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. Now we go to the next chapter.

The chapter verse fifty-four. That they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed from him with their teeth. But he, being full of oligos, looked up steadfastly to heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, as if waiting, ready to receive his love.

Standing on the right hand of God. And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with one voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him.

And the witnesses lay down their throes, and the young men spake whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord Jesus, lay not this thing to their charge.

And when he had said this, the next three words are the sweetest words that were ever written of the strength of God, casting from this world into the next. He fell asleep. Allah.

Now we will consider together this evening, these words that we have read together from the sixth chapter, and the seventh chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. This is the first era of the Christian Church, and as we have been reading together, there were cross-crossed days in the Church. Verse one, And those days when the number of the disciples was multiplied.

And in verse seven, and the word of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly. And a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. Days of revival.

And yet, running parallel with these days of revival, there was a fierce persecution. The enemy was not going to let this thing go without a challenge. The forces of evil are mustered at full strength to oppose it.

To halt, if possible, the progress of the work of God in the early Church. Souls are not easily won. And the enemy will always muster all his power to oppose the work of God.

And especially the work of evangelizing. The methods that were used were cruel. They were brutal.

They had no regard to human rights, nor to civil law, nor to freedom of speech. They were arrested. They were beaten.

They were falsely accused. Brute force was applied. They were stoned, imprisoned, and put to death.

And in these very chapters, you have the first martyr of the early Church, Stephen. But, his truth went marching on. As someone has said, God carries his workmen, but carries on his work.

Why do we not see these prosperous days in the Church today? God is the same. His power is the same. The gospel is the same.

Is it because we had things too easy? Things were not easy in the early Church. Are we having things too easy? There's no persecution today. Is it because we have no persecution? Are we too accommodating? Are we too compromising? I don't know.

There must be some reason. I believe it was God's intention that in every era of the Church, we should have these prosperous days. We should see these revivals.

We should see the little women brought to Christ. We should see them saved by his sovereign grace, and redeemed by his precious blood. But in many parts of the world today, there are signs that this persecution is coming back, and we may yet have fierce persecution.

And I believe we will, before the thrones of this dispensation. Evil men shall wax worse and worse. No sinister, no terrible have we reached the closing days of this dispensation.

And I believe with the persecution, we shall also have the last church of believers into the Church. And when the last stone is built into the Church, when the last soul is brought in, then we shall die. Now what sort of people were there in this early Church? Someone has said, the world is looking for better methods.

God is looking for better men. What kind of men were they? Yes. They were extraordinary men.

Extraordinary men, with an extraordinary experience. A lot of Christian people there. Christian people are not ordinary people.

We are extraordinary people. We have an extraordinary experience with God, that the outside world knows nothing about. Believers are not ordinary people.

They are extraordinary people. There is a story told of Dr. Fullerton, Dr. W.I. Fullerton, that he spent one week at a motel with a very great Indian Christian by the name of Sadhu Sundar Singh. Maybe some of you have read his book.

Sadhu Sundar Singh. Dr. Fullerton spent one week with him at the same motel. And he tells us that he will never in his life forget that experience.

Amongst other things that the Sadhu said to him was that he had been an angel under God to baptize eight believers in the forbidden land of Tibet. And Dr. Fullerton said to him, Well, for people to take their stand in the land like that, they must be extraordinary believers. And he said he'll never forget the reply that the Sadhu gave him.

He said, free them all. And the other five are just ordinary Christians. And Dr. Fullerton says, And they are the enigma of the church.

Just ordinary Christians. In the language of the New Testament, there isn't such a thing. We are not ordinary people.

Far from it. These were not ordinary people. That's why they saw these prosperous days in the church.

These people were people who were fully committed. Fully concentrated. These were the people that turned the world upside down.

Now I want us to look at just one of them. The deacons. And we take Stephen as our example.

You notice there were ten, there were seven deacons chosen. And if you read the narrative carefully, you'll find that the highest qualifications were necessary for the lesser office of a deacon. The highest qualifications were necessary.

You are never moral to standard. Office is not given in the early church to people of eminent positions, or of wealth, or of any other reason. Positions in the early church, even as a deacon, people must have the highest qualifications and the standard is never lowered.

And this is one of them. Stephen. There are four things said of him in this very chapter.

It is said that he was full of faith. He was full of Holy Ghost. He was full of grace.

And he was full of power. Full of faith. Full of Holy Ghost.

Full of grace. And full of power. First of all then, he was full of faith.

And when a man is full of faith, there is no room for unbelief. And there is nothing that cripples the work of God like unbelief. He could not do many mighty works there in Nazareth because of their unbelief.

Unbelieving believers, as you know, we only really believe the things, the truths, the doctrines. We only really believe what we put to practice. That's all.

He is a man that was full of faith. Faith is the foundation. Faith is fundamental to all Christian experience.

If you can shake a man's faith, if you can undermine his faith, the whole superstructure tumbles to the ground. Faith is fundamental to Christian experience. We read, him that cometh to God must believe that faith.

That's an act of faith. Must believe that he is. And he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

And then believe without faith it is impossible to please him. You must exercise faith in Christian experience. You can't do without it.

Faith, we read, in the Christians and the Hebrews, is the substance. I like that word. Faith is not something in the wind.

Faith is not something loose. Faith is the substance. And when you put a substance like that you've got something, faith is the substance of things hoped for.

The evidence of things not seen. When you come to the ancient epistle, we read, by grace are you saved through faith. It is said that Martin Luther was the father of the Reformation.

For many years he had been groping in the darkness and superstition of the Roman Church. And make no mistake about it, there is darkness, and there is superstition, and there is idolatry in the Roman Church. Still there.

Don't you close your eyes in this great country, this great country of America, to the Roman Church. Martin Luther was groping in the darkness and in the superstition and in the idolatry of the Roman Church for years until one day there flashed into his mind and into his heart this word of God that just shall live by faith. And that word completely changed the life and the experience of Martin Luther, the monk that stripped the world that just shall live by faith.

And you and I have today a lot to thank God for the Reformation. It shook the very foundation of the Roman Church. It crumbled the foundation of the Roman Church in many parts of the world.

And you and I have a lot to thank God for the Reformation and for Martin Luther. But somebody has said that if Martin Luther was the father of the Reformation, Paul must have been the grandfather of the Reformation. For three times in his epistles he quotes the very same scripture that just shall live by faith.

You get it in the Roman Epistle chapter 1 and verse 17. You get it in the Galatian Epistle chapter 3 and verse 11. You get it in the Hebrew Epistle chapter 10 and verse 38.

And I'll correct how wonderfully exact the scriptures are. For the emphasis is put in the right place in all those three scriptures. Not in the same place every time, but in the right place every time.

In the Roman Epistle we read that just shall live by faith. By faith. He can't live any other way.

There is no other people that can live this life unless it is by faith. It is not by works of righteousness which we have done. It is not by ritual.

The just said the Apostle in the Epistle to the Romans shall live by faith and by faith alone. Again in the Galatian Epistle it's the just that shall live by faith. And they are the only people that can live by faith.

Those who have been justified by faith in the presence of a Holy God. Those who have been saved by his sovereign grace. Those who have been washed in his precious blood.

They are the only people who can live by faith. The just shall live by faith. And then when you come to the Hebrew Epistle the emphasis shifts again.

The just shall live by faith. He's alive because of his faith. He wouldn't be alive were it not for his faith.

And the great Apostle Paul says alike he says that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. Well, someone has gone one better step and said if Martin Luther was the father of the Reformation and Paul the Apostle was the grandfather of the Reformation then Habakkuk must be the great, great grandfather of the Reformation. For right back in the book of Habakkuk you get these very words the just shall live by faith a long time before the cross.

What does that teach you and I? It is that in all ages any relationship with God has always been on the ground of faith. Even right back in the book of Habakkuk and what a faith he had. When everything just crumbled around him when everything went to pieces Habakkuk transposed to his faith in God he never wavered.

What a faith the just shall live by faith. Stephen was full of faith. How does that apply to you and I? Have you got implicit faith in the work of Calvin? Do you rest there? Have you faith in the Bible? Are you quite sure of that? No doubts whatsoever? Are you absolutely certain that this is God's work? That all scriptures given by inspiration are we quite sure of it? Faith in the Bible, the whole Bible the whole truth and nothing but the truth Faith in prayer When you kneel and pray can you be absolutely sure that he hears you? O thou that hearest prayer you know doubt in whatsoever Ask he said and he shall be given speak and he shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you Faith in conversions, have you still got that? Or don't you look for conversions? On the last day here do you pray for conversions? Do you expect conversions? Have you not been asked for conversions? Would it surprise you if somebody was converted? Have you lost your faith in conversion? Faith in the present Faith in the future Faith in life Faith in death These all die, believe me in faith Now you can die like that Holy Grail He was a man full of faith Secondly He was a man full of the Holy Ghost By faith I lay hold upon God By the Holy Ghost God lays hold on me We are even told that our very bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost Do you believe that? Your body is the temple, so teaches the Apostle of the Holy Ghost How careful we ought to be How surrendered we ought to be Do you know when a man or a woman is filled with the Holy Ghost there are evidences of it You can't mistake if you take a trip to the old country, to London sometime I hope you will Residence of the next Queen Elizabeth As you approach that palace Buckingham Palace you can tell a long way off whether she's in residence or whether she's not You've no need to go into the palace to see whether she's there or not You've no need to make any investigation whatsoever The evidence is there, and you can see a long way away Whenever she's in residence the Royal Stanton, the flag is flying above the palace And you can know that she's there Whenever the flag is flying she can fly in residence That's the outward evidence that she's there And you know exactly so there are outward signs You can tell when you can meet a brother or a sister filled with the Holy Ghost The spiritual man and the spiritual woman In fact you get that injunction in Ephesians Be filled with the Spirit and you can recognize that there are unmistakable signs You know one of the greatest things one of the greatest things that was ever said of any man was said of Elijah by the Shunammite woman She had seen him pass that way left him really pass that way She had observed him passing that way And this is her testimony Behold, she said Now I perceive that this is a holy man of God which passes by us continually.

What a testimony If you pass by continually up and down these streets you tread the same path every day You will be observed by people who live in your area You will be seen by many people And the wicked watcheth the righteousness they read, and they still do it today What's the verdict? What's the verdict? You and I are going to be totally different to other people as I've already said We have a different experience to other people We claim that we belong to Jesus Christ If so then we ought to be different He was full of the Holy Ghost And every day he was full of grace.

Here is a gracious man full of grace You know you can be sound in doctrine You can be sound in all the fundamentals of the Christian faith And yet you can be an ungracious man. Do you know this? You can see it But not so did Stephen Stephen was a man full of grace He had grace to suffer He took some grace to suffer When the stones were falling fast He makes no attempt to reply He makes no attempt to defend himself He has grace to suffer How much grace have we got to suffer? I wonder How much can we suffer?

I wonder He had grace to endure He doesn't repent He doesn't turn in his face Not a bit He endures to the end He's got grace to endure And I believe the choicest thing of all is he had grace to forgive Even those who were stoning him to death Did you notice the last prayer of Stephen? Lord, lay not this thing to their charge He had drunk deeply to the spirit of his master The first cry that came from the cross was Father, forgive them They know not what they do And the last cry that came from the lips of Stephen was Lay not this thing to their charge He had grace to forgive Can you forgive?

Have you been misunderstood? Have you been abused by somebody? Have you been falsely accused? Have there been blunderings about you? Can you forgive? Have you grace to forgive? This is one of the Christian virtues that is absolutely essential The grace to forgive If you can't forgive One thing is certain You'll never be able to repeat the Lord's Prayer You'll never be able to say Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us How often we read in the Gospel Should I forgive my brother?

Seven times Seventy times seven grace to forgive In fact, to not to forgive is anti-Christian is anti-Christian You must forgive if you're a Christian He has grace to forgive And finally He was full of power How is it you and I are not full of this power? For notice It isn't material power All the power that some people have is the power of grace But not with Stephen It isn't political power It isn't cultural power It isn't the power of influence It's spiritual power Stephen was full of spiritual power Then you and I are too full of other things Full of other things And you can't have both You can't have both Listen to these words by a young man who gave life at a young age in the service of Christ Jim Elliot said these words He is no fool who is prepared to lose what he cannot keep in order to gain what he cannot lose He is no fool to lose what he cannot keep in order to gain what he can never lose Are we willing to let go?

So let go Let go Let go of the world Let go of things that hinder Let everything go and let God let God come Let God take a hold Let God take control He is a man that was full of power He is a man in in the Old Testament His name was Lot We read that his righteous soul was against with a filthy conversation of the Sodomites Now here is a believer, what we would call a believer today He was a man of God, there's no doubt about that Listen again His righteous soul, we read was against with a filthy conversation of the Sodomites But he had no power He had no power He was far too involved We read that his words were as idle tales No member of his family believed in him Not his own children believed in him, he had no power Isn't it so?

To have lost the power they didn't believe Now what is the secret of power? There's no need for me to tell you the secret of power You can have it in one word, contact That's the secret Contact That's the secret of this electric light that we have in this world this evening Once you break the connection you're in the dark The secret of power is contact Oh, if we can keep the contact every day every hour of the evening That's the secret of power Keeping in touch with Him, with God with the Savior with the Holy Ghost Keeping in touch with a kind God every day Challenge only blessed ones that in all thy wondrous power flowing through us that's all we are, just candles flowing through us thou can fuse us every day and every hour to God's equal here this evening I commend to you this life to young believers in the audience this evening don't be satisfied with anything less than God has to give to you and He gives the very best to those who

leave a choice with Him Let go and let God Perhaps we can sing that lovely hymn Tenors only blessed ones Amen Amen

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