

A Radiant Life and A Radiant Death (Acts 7:54-60)

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Guidelines: Protect confidentiality and follow the leader's prompts

Lectio Divina Rhythms/Process (Repeat three times):

- (a) Read the Scripture passage ("Lectio")
- (b) Reflect on the focus question below ("Meditatio")
- (c) Respond in quiet prayer/journaling ("Oratio")
- (d) Rest in God's invitation for you then pray/share out loud if you want ("Contemplatio")

Introduction: Early in Acts Stephen, along with six other disciples of Jesus, was chosen by the Apostles to assist them. He was so full of the Holy Spirit, and of God's grace and power, that he was able to do miracles and to speak with an authoritative wisdom and anointing that was convincing to everyone. His face glowed like that of an angel! (Acts 6:5, 8, 15) Stephen proclaimed to the Sanhedrin and other religious leaders that they had betrayed and murdered the Christ, the prophet that Moses spoke of and the Righteous One who replaced the temple. Under the direction of Saul, they were furious and stoned him to death, but as they did so he was standing in God's kingdom, radiant and overflowing with mercy for them. (Acts 7) God used Stephen's witness to convert Saul, who became the Apostle Paul. (Acts 22:20)

Opening Prayer: "Father... into your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46; Psalm 31:5).

Read Scripture: Acts 7:54-60 (NIV84)

54 When they heard this, they were [cut to the heart] and gnashed their teeth at him. 55 But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 "Look," he said, "I see [the heavens] open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

57 At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, 58 dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

59 While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep. (Brackets are Young's Literal Translation)

1st Reading: What is one word or phrase the Holy Spirit impresses on you? Meditate on that.

2nd Reading: Enter into the Scripture passage. What do you feel? What specific situation in your life today relates? Write down a prayer or pray quietly.

3rd Reading: What is God's personal invitation for you from the Scripture? You can write down what God may be saying to you or a prayer of thanks. Or rest quietly in God.