

“A Lay Person Stands For Christ”
Acts 6:8-7:60

The church pictured in the Book of Acts was a growing church. No doubt, many important factors made it so. But one main one is certain: “The active part which lay people had in the life and work of that church.”

Under the topic “A Lay Person Stands For Christ,” a number of examples from the New Testament could be used. In this message, the focus is on that man of God named Stephen.

What do we learn about Stephen when we study how the Book of Acts describes him? These lessons are clear and should motivate us to examine the spiritual qualities of our lives. Stephen had those spiritual qualities which led the early church members to nominate him as a deacon.

1. Stephen was “full of faith and the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 6:5) He was a true believer who was committed to Christ as his Savior and Lord. This faith brought into his life the presence of the Holy Spirit which Jesus promised His people.
2. He was “full of faith and power.” (Acts 6:8) People who are full of faith are also full of divine power. Such people have access to the power of Almighty God. Their strength is not just their own. They possess in their lives “a higher power” which is always available for use in Christ’s name.
3. Stephen was full of wisdom. He was spiritually wise. He knew how to live and act in accord with the Spirit of God. No doubt he had great knowledge but he also had divine wisdom.
4. Stephen had a clear vision of a world for Christ. He could see all people in the Church of the living Lord. He knew that “in Christ” all people are one.
5. Stephen stood for Christ regardless of the opposition. He was under great pressure as people are today but he stood and died for Christ as a committed witness.

The Christian Church today – just like that early Church pictured in the Book of Acts – needs lay persons who stand for Christ. Such people may not be called on to die for Christ as Stephen did, but such people are definitely called upon to live for Christ and to serve others in His great and holy name.

The hymn writer presents a strong challenge:

Rise up, O men of God!
Have done with lesser things;
Give heart and mind and
Soul and strength to serve
The King of Kings.

Rise up, O men of God!
His Kingdom tarries long;
Bring in the day of brotherhood
And end this night of wrong.

Rise up, O men of God!
The church for you doth wait;
Her strength unequal to her task;
Rise up and make her great!

Lift high the Cross of Christ!
Tread where His feet have trod!
As brothers of the Son of man;
Rise up of men of God.

Rise up all people of God. Stand tall and be counted for Christ. AMEN – MAY IT BE SO.

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