

Acts 8:1-8

August 3, 2025



CONVERSATION STARTERS

- What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?
- What Scripture has been shaping you recently?
- Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?
- What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?
- What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?
- What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?
- What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Group Discussion: What is a martyr?

Place students in small groups, ideally with a leader in each group, to discuss what a martyr is and how believers are still martyred in some parts of the world today. Consider also using this time to talk through some modern-day statistics about the persecuted church, like those provided by Open Doors at <https://www.opendoorsus.org/en-US/>.

Questions to discuss:

What is a martyr?

Why are some Christians persecuted for their faith today?

What can we learn from Christian martyrs, even if we never experience persecution in the same way?

How can stories of Christian martyrs affect our faith?

Teaching Moment:

We kicked off today by talking about martyrs and how Christians are still martyred in many parts of the world today. In our study of Acts, we will read about the very first Christian martyr, Stephen.

DISCUSSION

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ACTS 7:54-8:1.

What stands out to you in this passage?

What did Stephen see? How would that help him endure his persecution?

What was the Sanhedrin's response to Stephen's sermon and vision?

How did the religious leaders respond?

How did Stephen react to this unfair treatment?

How can we follow Stephen's example when faced with opposition to Jesus today?

What does Acts 8:1 teach us about Saul (also known as Paul) at that time?

What was one negative result of Stephen's murder? What was one positive result of Stephen's murder?

How did God use both outcomes for His purposes?

GOING DEEPER

How does this account support Jesus's words about the way His followers would be treated?

What makes it worth facing this kind of opposition for Jesus?

APPLICATION

What can we learn from Stephen's heart posture in today's passage? How can we seek to live similarly?

What does this account teach us about how the gospel message might be received when we share it? How can it give us boldness?

What does this passage teach us about God?

PRAYER

Thank God for the examples of Jesus and Stephen in Scripture, who modeled faithfulness, humility, and care for others more than themselves. Ask that God would help your group adopt a similar heart posture and ask that He would grant you boldness as you share the gospel message as Stephen did.

LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead as we continue the series on Acts next week.

August 10, 2025 --- Acts 8:1-8

COMMENTARY

Acts 7:54-8:1

Scholars are divided as to whether Stephen was formally sentenced to stoning, the customary Jewish method of execution, or whether he died by mob violence. The latter seems more likely. Under the Romans, the Jews could not carry out executions. What began as a formal trial deteriorated into a lynch mob, so furious were the Jewish leaders at Stephen's words. Saul is introduced to the story of Acts as the onlooker holding the stoner's garments. As the dying Jesus had committed His spirit to God, so did Stephen to Jesus (Luke 23:46). Also like Jesus, he asked forgiveness for his killers (Luke 23:34). We call Stephen the first Christian "martyr." The word martyr comes from the Greek word *martus*, which means "witness." Like all martyrs, Stephen was a witness to his Lord, even to the death.