



ACTS: LIVING ON MISSION

Acts 6:8–8:3

Week of September 10, 2023

Start at 9:50–10:00

Belong: Use 5–10 minutes as an opportunity to get to know one another. The questions below are written for people to open-up and to know the group members.

Take a **few minutes** to hear about your group members' week.

Ask the question[s] below:

- **Fall is around the corner - what smell makes you think of fall more than any other?**
- **If you could experience one year from your life again, which year would it be?**

10:00–10:05

Believe: Use 5 minutes to read this week's assigned Scriptures then highlight each verse that helps you to understand the passage better. Include the book, chapter and verse(s).

This morning, Jacob preached on the **Boldness of Stephen** from **Acts 6:8–8:3**. These verses reveal the first wave of persecution that the early church would endure. In this Scripture, we will witness the great faithfulness of Stephen and receive an introduction to the most stiff-necked Jew of them all...Saul. **To get started, have a group member read Acts 7:54–8:3 aloud.**

- How would you summarize these verses in **1–2 sentences**.

10:05–10:15

Build: Use about 10 minutes to engage the passage and wrestle with its meaning.

In this section, we are going to spend about 10 minutes building up to our understanding of Acts 7:54–8:3.

Have someone in class look up the word "blasphemy" in a dictionary then give the definition to the class.

- Specifically, what two things is Stephen accused of blaspheming in **Acts 6:13**?
- So, does the church today accuse people of "blaspheming" the church building?

If you were on trial for "blasphemy," how would you begin your defense? What would your first statement be?

Under great stress, Stephen delivers an oral history of the Old Testament as a defense against the charge of blasphemy. Do you think you would be able to give a defense and summarize the Old Testament like he did? The New Testament?

- What would the reaction be to your attempt to defend your faith?

In **Acts 7:54**, how did the listeners react to Stephen? How does this compare to **Acts 5:17 & 33**?

10:15-10:35

Become: Use about 20 minutes to apply what you have read. How can this help me? What would the application of this verse look like in my life? What is God saying to me?

In **Acts 7:58**, we are introduced to Saul. What about Saul's involvement in the stoning of Stephen impacts you?

In **Acts 7:60**, we see Stephen's willingness to forgive those who are stoning him. Does his ability to forgive these people surprise you?

- Is forgiving others who have wronged us necessary as we grown in sanctification? Why?
- How are we at forgiving others in our life who have wronged us?

In **Acts 8:1**, we see that the church in Jerusalem is persecuted from within...from Jewish leaders.

- What hardships has FBC faced recently? How did we handle the hardship?
- Why do Christians sometimes get angry at preachers?

A simple definition for **God's sovereignty** is this, "**God's sovereignty is His right and power to do all that He decides to do.**"

- What three geographic locations are mentioned in **Acts 8:1**?
- Now, look back at **Acts 1:8**. In light of that verse, what might the author be indicating in **Acts 8:1** about the sovereignty of God?

Fill in the following statement:

- **Knowing that God is _____ shows me that I am _____?**

10:35/ - Class ends at 10:45

Begin: Use the last 10 minutes for prayer. It's important that we not only hear and discuss God's Word but respond to it. (James 1:22)

How should it change the way you pray, think, speak or act this week?

At the end of the conversation, spend some time praying as a group. Here are some prompts:

- Spend some group time-sharing requests and praying specifically for them.
- Spend some time praying for FBC and that we would be encouraged and hopeful in how God is working in and through FBC Portland.

Additional Resources:

Blue Letter Bible: Acts 7 & 8: Check out the QR code to learn more.

- https://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik_david/study-guide/acts/acts-7.cfm
- https://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik_david/study-guide/acts/acts-8.cfm



Precept Austin: Acts 7 & 8: Check out the QR code to learn more.

- <https://www.preceptaustin.org/acts-8-commentary>
- <https://www.preceptaustin.org/acts-7-commentary>

