The Stoning of Stephen

Acts – *The Gospel in Motion*

Acts 7:54-60

1) Up to this point in our study of Acts, we have seen the early church thriving. In today's passage, Stephen, a faithful Christ-follower, is arrested and falsely accused of speaking against Moses and the temple. In front of the Council, he gives a lengthy and pointed speech, recounting Israel's history and calling out their resistance to God's Spirit. In spite of the crowd's anger and rage, Stephen peacefully looks toward heaven, sees God with Jesus at His right hand, and forgives them as they stone him to death.

- Why do you think Stephen chose to speak truth so boldly, knowing the cost?
- How do you balance truth and grace in your own conversations?

2) Stephen's death looks like defeat, but it becomes a catalyst for the spread of the Gospel. As the church scatters, even Saul—holding coats of participants that day—is being prepared by God for transformation. The blood of Stephen becomes the seed of the church as God turns tragedy into mission.

- Where do you need to trust that God is working in ways you cannot yet see?
- How does Stephen's example shape your view of suffering and perseverance?
- Who has planted seeds of faith in your life—and how are you planting seeds for others?

3) Stephen looked up—fixing his eyes on Jesus—and chose forgiveness, even for his murderers. His final words echo Jesus' own from the cross. We are reminded that we learn by imitation: from Stephen, from those who have shaped our faith, and from the community around us.

- Who in your life models faith you want to emulate?
- How are you doing in the area of forgiveness—i.e., "love's hardest work?"
- Who do you need to invite to walk alongside you this year?

4) Giving thanks for our community of faith, we stand on the shoulders of those who have invested in us. As we begin this year, ask yourself these three questions:
   1. Who is going to help you pull this year off?
   2. To whom do you need to be reconciled?

3. Who do you need to invite to walk alongside you?