

Life Church Sunday July 19, 2020

Pastor Eva

Acts Chapter 7:35-53 New International Version (NIV)

³⁵ “This is the same Moses they had rejected with the words, ‘Who made you ruler and judge?’ He was sent to be their ruler and deliverer by God himself, through the angel who appeared to him in the bush. ³⁶ He led them out of Egypt and performed wonders and signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea and for forty years in the wilderness.

³⁷ “This is the Moses who told the Israelites, ‘God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your own people.’^[a] ³⁸ He was in the assembly in the wilderness, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our ancestors; and he received living words to pass on to us.

³⁹ “But our ancestors refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt. ⁴⁰ They told Aaron, ‘Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who led us out of Egypt—we don’t know what has happened to him!’^[b] ⁴¹ That was the time they made an idol in the form of a calf. They brought sacrifices to it and reveled in what their own hands had made. ⁴² But God turned away from them and gave them over to the worship of the sun, moon and stars. This agrees with what is written in the book of the prophets:

“Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings
forty years in the wilderness, people of Israel?

⁴³ You have taken up the tabernacle of Molek
and the star of your god Rephan,
the idols you made to worship.

Therefore I will send you into exile^[c] beyond Babylon.

⁴⁴ “Our ancestors had the tabernacle of the covenant law with them in the wilderness. It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen. ⁴⁵ After receiving the tabernacle, our ancestors under Joshua brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them. It remained in the land until the time of David, ⁴⁶ who enjoyed God’s favor and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob.^[d] ⁴⁷ But it was Solomon who built a house for him.

⁴⁸ “However, the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands. As the prophet says:

⁴⁹ “Heaven is my throne,
and the earth is my footstool.

What kind of house will you build for me?
says the Lord.

Or where will my resting place be?

⁵⁰ Has not my hand made all these things?' [e]

⁵¹ “You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! ⁵² Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— ⁵³ you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.”

Acts Chapter 7 – Part 3

- Review of Part 1 – verses 1-17:
 - Stephen is falsely accused of speaking against this holy place and against the law – Acts 6:13
 - Holy place means the temple, the law meaning the traditions and customs that had been handed down from Moses.
 - Stephen notes the Israelites destructive patterns, which lead to them rejecting and killing the prophets. This is a reminder to us to let go of destructive patterns in our lives. People in our lives that see clearly can help us with this. Matthew 7:4-5.
 - Stephen gives the big picture of what God is doing
- Review of Part 2 – verses 17-34:
 - Stephen demonstrated that his teachings about Jesus are not against the traditions dating back to Moses but are consistent with them.
 - God raised Moses up for a purpose. God chose Moses for a task.
 - Moses was rejected by his people.
 - In the Burning Bush encounter in which Moses is standing on Holy Ground – God revealed himself in a new way and instructed Moses at the age of 80 to return to Egypt. God is consistent with rescuing his people as he has done time after time, but does it in a new way. God called Moses and he answered “Here I am”
 - God also raises us up, and our upbringing, training and experiences can uniquely qualify us for tasks He has called us to as well. We’re never too old or too young; God continues to call us throughout our entire lives as we make ourselves available to him.
- As we reviewed in Part 2, Stephen effectively refuted the accusation that in his teachings about Jesus, he was speaking against the law of Moses.
- Today in Part 3 we’ll cover how Stephen addresses the allegation that he was speaking against the Temple. Spoiler alert! Stephen gives an answer that makes the members of the Sanhedrin furious.

- Point one – Members of the Sanhedrin represent themselves as protecting and revering the temple, but the history of the Israelites has shown that just having the temple is not enough:
- The Israelites had the tabernacle in the wilderness but they fell into idolatry
- When the people thought Moses was taking too long, they made a golden calf as an idol: Exodus 32:1-4
- Patience is one of the characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit: Galatians 5:22-23 (RSV).
- Patience can be challenging but is one of the ways we can keep in step with the Spirit, walk by the Spirit, and not resist the Spirit in small circumstances and more important ones.
- The temple alone doesn't guarantee God's presence if the heart of the people isn't right
- Point two – the temple as a man made building can't contain God: 1 Kings 8:27, Isaiah 66:1-2
- God came as the man Jesus, the Righteous One that the religious leaders betrayed and murdered: Acts 7:52. Jesus said if you've seen me you've seen the father: John 14:9.
- Jesus, the Righteous One is the atoning sacrifice for our sins and the sins of the whole world. 1 John 2: 1-2.
- There is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. Sin and death are defeated: Romans 8:1-4
- His Kingdom is advancing: Matthew 11:12