

HOW TO START A REVOLUTION

Standing Up for What You Believe

Acts 6:8 -7:60

... worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. ¹⁶ But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. ¹⁷ Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong!

1 Peter 3:15 – 17 NLT

Stephen was charged with four counts of blasphemy. After being brought before the Sanhedrin, Stephen defends himself and then charges the religious leaders with rebellion against God in their treatment of Jesus. Stephen's demeanor in responding to the Sanhedrin is a model of defending the faith all of us need to emulate.

HOW TO STAND UP FOR WHAT YOU BELIEVE

1. LOVE YOUR AUDIENCE:

To this he replied: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me!"

Acts 7:2a

Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

Acts 7:60

Jesus tells us to love our enemies. It may be the most outlandish thing Jesus ever said. What can we do to enable us to love like we should?

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

Ephesians 4:15

Notice how speaking the truth in love grows us more and more like Jesus.

The ultimate thing is to feel it but feeling it is not necessary to doing it. Speaking the truth must be done in love but speaking the truth in and of itself is not love.

What do people know first about us . . . where we stand on a theological position or that we love them?

2. SHARE THE WHY, NOT JUST THE WHAT BEHIND YOUR FAITH

The Charges And The Defense:

1. You blasphemed God . . .

The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham

Acts 7:2

2. You blasphemed Moses . . .

This is the Moses who told the Israelites, 'God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your own people.'

Acts 7:37

3. You blasphemed the Law . . .

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. But our ancestors refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt.

Acts 7:38-39

4. You blasphemed the Temple

"However, the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands. As the prophet says: '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? Has not my hand made all these things?'"

Acts 7:48-50

"You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! 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 —

Acts 7:51-53

3. REMEMBER GOD IS WITH YOU.

But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

Acts 7:55-56

While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Acts 7:59

After all what is the worst thing they can do to you?

Losing it all here is never the end.