

Living in the Flow

Acts 6:8–15

Introduction

Have you ever noticed how weary life becomes when you live outside of who God made you to be ... When you spend your days trying to live up to someone else's expectations -- or measure yourself against someone else's success -- or carry a role you were never designed to carry ... It drains you ... It robs you of joy ... Believe me I know ... I did this for so many years in ministry.

Please catch this – you were never meant to live in somebody else's lane ... You are not designed nor graced as they are ... When you step outside of who God made you to be -- you step outside of peace and purpose ... But when you stay in your lane -- when you live out of your oneness with Christ -- you begin to naturally flow as a new creation being.

Now last week we saw this principle at work in the early ekklesia ... The church was growing so fast that needs were being overlooked ... Complaints were rising ... But in response to the situation – the apostles didn't step out of their lane ... They didn't interject themselves – maybe as others would expect – simply because they were the leaders of the ekklesia ... They stayed in their lane – devoted to prayer and the Word ... Instead – they gave spirit-filled wisdom – instructions to the body – as to how to address and solve the issue ... And as a result of the apostles staying in their lane – the body doing their part – staying in their lane by following those instructions – the issue was solved – and the church multiplied even more.

And this is where we meet Stephen ... He was one of the seven chosen ... He was a member of the body – chosen by his peers – to help run a food ministry ... This is not a small thing – but a great example of staying in your lane ... Stephen wasn't one of the apostles – nor did he attempt to mimic their leadership style ... He simply knew who he was and stayed in his lane ... And

what we will soon discover – what flowed out of his life – is one of the clearest pictures we have in the New Testament of what a new creation – kainos being really looks like.

The Portrait of a Kainos Being (v. 8)

Our text says -- **Stephen full of grace and power did great wonders and signs among the people (Acts 6:8)** ... Notice this – he was full before he began to function ... He was flowing from his oneness with Christ ... He did not serve tables to gain an identity – he did not perform miracles to prove who he was ... He was fully awakened to these truths ... He was already full ... He was already one with Christ ... And from this realization – grace and power overflowed ... Paul echoes this truth when he writes – **you are complete in Him who is the head of all rule and authority (Colossians 2:10)** ... Stephen's life was living proof of that completeness ... He was not striving to become something more – he was simply living out of what he already was ... And Jesus Himself said – **out of your innermost being shall flow rivers of living water (John 7:38)** ... Stephen did not need to chase after rivers – the river flowed out of the fullness within him

Spiritual Nugget

Catch this - - Your identity is not defined by what you do ... You are not your title -- not your job -- not your mistakes -- not your past ... You are His – one in the Spirit – united with Him in oneness ... When you live from that truth – that realization - - You do not have to strive to make the Spirit move -- the Spirit will just naturally flow from oneness ... Now watch what happens when Stephen stays true to his identity and oneness.

Wisdom Flows from Union (vvs. 9-10)

The Bible says -- **they were not able to resist the wisdom and the inspiration of the Spirit with which he spoke (Acts 6:10 AMP)** ... Stephen did not stand up – trying to sound like nor imitate Peter ... He simply stayed in his lane – stayed true to himself – and wisdom naturally resonated out of him ... Jesus promised this very thing -- **I Myself will give you wisdom that will reduce all your adversaries to stammers and stutters (Luke 21:15 VOICE)** ... That promise was not only for the apostles -- it is for every new creation – kainos being filled with the Spirit ... Paul

reminds us in Colossians 1:27 (TLB) - - Christ is in you and that is your hope of sharing in God's glory

Spiritual Nugget

Wisdom is not something you have to chase after -- it is Someone who is living within you ... In this situation – God doesn't need another Peter ... He needs you ... He needs you to be you - - in your lane -- full of the Spirit -- resonating with the kingdom ... When you stop imitating and start abiding -- wisdom begins to flow that no one can resist ... Now catch this – there is a tension – when you are flowing in power and wisdom – not everyone will be happy nor be blessed by your wisdom.

Kingdom Resonance Shakes Systems (vss. 11-14)

When the leaders could not argue with Stephen -- they turned to lies ... They stirred up people - - they hired false witnesses -- they twisted his words ... When the world or religion cannot explain you -- they will try to eliminate you ... When systems cannot control you -- they will try to cancel you ... Jesus warned His disciples of this very thing -- you will be hated by all because you bear My name but it is the one who has endured and persevered to the end who will be saved (Matthew 10:22 AMP) ... Opposition is not a surprise -- it is a promise ... John records the words of Jesus -- if the world hates you remember that it hated Me first (John 15:18 NLT) ... The reaction Stephen faced was the same reaction Christ Himself endured ... And Paul reminds us in Second Timothy -- yes everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:12 NLT) ... If you are truly resonating in harmony with the Spirit – expect pushback ... We see it in Stephen's day -- and we see it in our day ... The world has the same reaction ... They cannot argue with Spirit filled wisdom -- so they attack it ... They cannot debate a kainos being -- so they try to silence it ... Opposition is often the clearest sign that you are resonating with the kingdom.

Spiritual Nugget

Let's be honest – the tension is real ... You feel it when the world resists you ... You feel it when people twist your words ... You feel it when opposition makes you want to shrink back ... The natural man hates this pressure ... Everything in your flesh wants to push it away -- to compromise -- to back down – so the external pressure and internal feelings will stop ... But

hear me -- do not surrender your eternal life – just to quiet the discomfort of the natural man ... Do not let the fear of rejection rob you of the joy of oneness ... Jesus said -- the one who endures to the end will be saved ... Endurance is not easy -- but eternity is worth it ... So, when the pressure comes -- let it push you deeper into your union with Christ ... Let it anchor you -- not shake you ... Because the discomfort of opposition is temporary -- but the glory of oneness is eternal ... Catch this – Stephen – in the middle of all this hostility – God leaves his accusers staring at something that they couldn't explain

The Radiance of Oneness (v. 15)

The council looked at Stephen and saw that his face was like the face of an angel (Acts 6:15) ... He was not trying to shine ... He was not showing off ... He was simply so full of the Spirit that kingdom light radiated from his face ... Remember when Moses came down from Sinai with a glowing face that eventually faded away ... The book of Exodus says -- **when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the covenant in his hands his face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord (Exodus 34:29 NIV)** ... But that glory did not last – as it soon faded away ... Paul explains this in Second Corinthians -- **if the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness. For what was once glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. And if what was fading away came with glory how much greater is the glory of what lasts (2 Corinthians 3:9–11 NIV)** ... Stephen stood in front of the Sanhedrin with a radiance that could not be hidden ... Why -- because the Kingdom was no longer outside on tablets of stone -- it was within ... **Christ in you the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27)** ... That is what a kainos being looks like ... Radiance is not something you strive for -- it is the natural overflow of oneness with Christ.

Takeaway

Stephen's life shows us a beautiful portrait of a kainos being ... He was full before he was functioning ... He did not imitate others – but resonated who he was ... He shook the systems of the world because the Pentecostal experience cannot be contained ... And he radiated with a glory that did not fade because the Kingdom was within him

Catch this -- when you try to live in somebody else's lane – you will end up drained and frustrated ... But when you stay in your lane -- when you live out of your union with Christ -- the Spirit begins to release grace – power and wisdom through you in ways no one can resist ... Do not be discouraged when no one else gets it ... Do not be shaken when worldly systems push back ... A kainos being is not defined by applause or opposition ... A kainos being is defined by oneness with Christ ... So, stop comparing ... Stop striving ... Stay in your lane ... Live out of fullness ... Let wisdom resonate ... Do not fear resistance ... And let the radiance of Christ shine through you ... The world will not understand you ... Religion will resist you ... But when you live as a kainos being in union with Christ -- you are living in the flow -- and nothing can stop the Spirit from shining through you.

Closing Prayer

Father – I thank You for the picture we see in Stephen -- a man full of grace and power -- a man who lived out of union with Christ -- a man who stayed in his lane and let Your Spirit shine through him ... Today we choose the same -- we choose to stop comparing -- stop striving -- and simply live out of the fullness of Christ within us ... We choose to stay in our lane -- the place You have called us -- the place where Your grace flows and Your wisdom speaks ... Lord when resistance comes -- when the systems of this world or religion rises up against us -- help us to remember that opposition is proof of resonance ... Let us not shrink back due to discomfort – but to stand firm in assurance of eternal life ... May we – as Stephen – radiate with Your presence – especially when we face hostility ... Holy Spirit -- keep us sensitive to the flow of oneness -- not out of hype or striving – but out of the deep river within -- Christ in us the hope of glory ... And now I declare over this ekklesia -- may you live in the flow of union this week -- may wisdom rise in your mouth -- may grace and power overflow in your actions -- and may the radiance of Christ be seen upon your face ... In the powerful name of Jesus -- Amen.