

1. Intro
  - a. We are proud to be stubborn and resilient (like the settlers)
    - i. We prefer heroes who are flawed, rough, even wicked
    - ii. We glorify sin, celebrate lust, and reward self-centeredness
    - iii. We like being independent. We don't want to need anyone (whether it is the government or God). → self-made man
  - b. But have you ever considered whether those things are good?
    - i. Appropriated to the proper channel they can be dynamic, life-changing, paradigm shattering, and beneficial for life (inventions, progress, etc)
    - ii. But if we take those same tendencies and plant them in an unhealthy plot of land, they grow into devastating consequences
  - c. You might rebel against your parents, your job, the law, but what happens when you are found rebelling against God?
    - i. Such is the accusation brought against Stephen in today's story
2. Acts 7:1
  - a. "Are you rebelling against our history and undermining the teachings of God?"
  - b. Stephen rehashes their history to provide an answer
3. Acts 7:2-8
  - a. God gave the Israelites a promise of an inheritance (when they didn't deserve it)
  - b. What does this have to do with you? We're getting there.
4. Acts 7:9-16
  - a. God gave the Israelites protection and provision (despite themselves)
  - b. What does this have to do with you? We're getting there.
5. Acts 7:17-29
  - a. In their darkest hour, God raised up a deliverer named Moses (by grace/mercy)
    - i. He was initially rejected
  - b. What does this have to do with you? We're getting there.
6. Acts 7:30-41
  - a. God saved the Israelites working through Moses (and they grumbled, resisted, and complained the whole time)
    - i. Moses said another prophet would come just like Him
  - b. What does this have to do with you? We're getting there.
7. Acts 7:42-50
  - a. Even after saving the Israelites, even after dwelling amongst them, they worshipped other gods (resisting him, ignoring him, forgetting about his kindness)
  - b. What does this have to do with you? We're getting there.
8. Acts 7:51-53
  - a. God promised, provided, protected, delivered, and gave the Israelites his presence
    - i. The Israelite ancestors rejected Him. They rejected His prophets. They even rejected Moses originally.
    - ii. Stephen says that they were still doing the same: Rejecting God, Jesus, & God's Word

- iii. EG: “You’re the one abandoning your God, not me.”
  - b. Why? Because they were stiff-necked = stubborn
  - c. Why? Because they were uncircumcised = appearance > heart
  - d. What does this have to do with you? We’re getting there.
- 9. Acts 7:54-60 - **\*\*Hand out canvas\*\***
  - a. Executed by Saul
  - b. They lay their garments at his feet, submitting to him, while they go and kill Stephen, God’s man
  - c. What does this have to do with you? So glad you asked.
- 10. You (and me)
  - a. Everything God has done physically with Moses and the father’s of the Hebrew faith, he has done spiritually through Jesus
  - b. God has given the promise of an inheritance
    - i. He has extended an incredible promise to you even if you don’t see it
  - c. God has provided for you and protected you
    - i. You’ve seen his sovereignty even if you don’t acknowledge it
  - d. God has raised up a deliverer
    - i. He has done everything to draw you to Him even if you are ignorant to it
  - e. God now dwells within his followers instead of in the temple
    - i. He desires personal intimacy with you for all eternity
  - f. Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, died to bring all these things to fruition
    - i. Yet, just like the leaders in this story, we resist God...
  - g. Why do you continually resist the Holy Spirit?
    - i. We lean towards being stiff necked
    - ii. We lean towards being uncircumcised in our hearts
  - h. When we resist the Holy Spirit, we lay our “garments” at the feet of an idol instead of laying our lives at the feet of the Savior (Acts 7:58)**
    - i. Who are you worshipping? Who are you surrendering to?
    - ii. We resist because we are worshipping something other than the one true God
      - 1. Ourselves (goals, dreams, aspirations, bodies, pleasure, etc)
      - 2. Religion (upbringing, systems filled w/ lies)
      - 3. Our own pride (intellect, faith, disbelief, power, my own god)
    - iii. Why do we resist? What are you worshipping?
- 11. So what are we supposed to do now?
  - a. Stop resisting. Give in. Surrender. That is what it means to follow Jesus.
  - b. Repent.**
    - i. Turn from a life of sin and disbelief (a life surrendered to something that isn’t God) and turn to the One True God
  - c. Be Baptized.**
    - i. If you claim to be a follower of Jesus and have not been baptized, stop resisting and embrace the command to identify w/ Jesus
    - ii. I would even say (though some might disagree) if you were baptized and it

meant nothing to you the first time, then be baptized and repent from that meaningless identification and do it renewed w/ purpose

1. Identifying w/ Him means you are surrendering to Him
2. His mission, his freedom (don't subject yourself to a new slavery), his victory (flee temptation)

iii. Baptism is a command and you can be baptized today.

**d. Surrender to the King**

i. It's about surrender

ii. If you claim to be a follower, then stop trying to live in two worlds

iii. Don't resist the call of sanctification: becoming more like Christ

1. You were purchased w/ his blood. You belong to Him.
2. Surrender your time to him, your money, your actions, your weekends, your dreams, your aspirations, your pleasures
3. Where have you continually resisted his spirit or his presence? A convicted sin, a convicted calling, a friend to invite to church or share Jesus with.

iv. If he is your King, embrace his purposes and His kingdom. Don't resist.

**e. Nobody likes the idea of surrendering**

i. Surrendering is for failures, for losers, for defeated people and nations

ii. But I'm not asking you to surrender as a defeated foe

iii. Surrender to love. Surrender for your benefit. Surrender for salvation. Surrender for purpose. Surrender for meaning. Surrender to Jesus.

**f. And if you're broken, convicted of sin, came here today ready for change, good.**

i. Brokenness is required before true surrender

ii. Blessed are the broken, the spiritually bankrupt

iii. Submit yourself to Jesus and let him make you whole, make you new, give you purpose, make your life count, forgive you of your sins

**g. In your hand you have a piece of canvas. Bring this home as a reminder. Write today's date on it in marker. Put it in your Bible, on your fridge, wherever will be meaningful**

i. Let it serve as a visual reminder to ask yourself this question:

ii. Who will you surrender to? An idol, laying your garments at the feet of a person, a thing, a job, or a philosophy? Or will you surrender to Jesus, laying your life at his feet.

**h. If you're not ready, feel free to lay your garment, your life, at the feet of something else. At the feet of your spouse, your kids, your job, your bank account, your pleasure, the temple of your body, your traditions, or whatever holds you back.**

i. Just remember that **a decision to not surrender to Jesus is really a decision to resist him.**

**i. Stop Resisting. Surrender to Jesus**