

Sermon Title: **“It’s All About Redemption (Part 3)”**

Sermon Series: Acts: Kingdom Vision 20/20

Text: **Acts 7:16-30**

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I. Introduction

While the Mission of Jesus is still the banner which unites and guides these Spirit-filled believers, the Vision of how would continue to grow and develop is always evolving forward to look more and more like God’s Kingdom.

Jerusalem -> All Judea -> Samaria -> the End of the Earth (Acts 1:8)

Three Weeks ago we saw how Stephen was full of four things:

1. Faith
2. Holy Spirit
3. God’s Grace
4. God’s Power

Two Weeks ago, we looked at the beginning of Stephen’s appeal to his Jewish Brethren- their shared patriarch Abraham. God had called Abraham to leave his people and follow Him, becoming a part of His plan to redeem all things. A Covenant unlike any other between God and humanity, this promise was symbolized by circumcision. *While it was on the flesh of men, God was always after the heart of all people- male and female, Jew, and Gentile.*

Last Week Stephen shared the story of Joseph. He was hoping they would see themselves in the role of Joseph’s brothers who were jealous of what God was choosing to do through him. When God’s anointing falls on someone their Jewish history has shown the immediate response is that of Jealousy. However, God had other plans that even included redeeming their Patriarchs.

Going Deeper: 1) *We are reminded from last week that Stephen was a man full of what four things? Are these available for all believers or a special few? What was Stephen hoping the Sanhedrin would see in themselves through the story of Joseph and his brothers?*

II. “A Faith that Outlives Us” (Acts 7:15-16)

Stephen continues his appeal to the Sanhedrin from their shared history in the Old Testament. This time the spotlight shines on to Moses. Before we jump into this, there is a note left over from last week’s text that I want to draw our attention to.

Over time Joseph and his brothers died while in Egypt. Egypt was where they lived and ministered, but it was not their home- not their ultimate destination. Note the following declaration of faith in God's promises from both Jacob and Joseph:

- Jacob (**Genesis 47:29-31**)
 - *See Hebrews 11:21*
- Joseph (**Genesis 50:24-26**)
 - *See Hebrews 11:22*

Going Deeper: 2) *It can be easy to trust God when things are going well; but what about the times when they are not? How are you investing in your relationship with God, building trust that if some of your plans change, you still trust Him? Jacob and Joseph trusted their own bodies, their children- generations onward would know God's promises fulfilled. Are you passing your faith on to others like this?*

III. "Civil Disobedience" (Acts 7:17-22)

The darkest of the night is right before the sunrise. (Acts 7:17-19)

All that God had done for Egypt was soon forgotten and His people exploited out of jealousy and fear. *If the Sanhedrin failed to see themselves in Joseph's brothers, maybe they will see themselves in Pharaoh!* How did everything get to this point?

- **Most became indebted to Pharaoh. See Genesis 47:13-26.** The famine in Egypt continued, even got worse, after Israel arrived. With this, so did the cost.
 - Money
 - Livestock
 - Land & Lives (property to Pharaoh)
- **Israel remained free and provided for. See Genesis 47:27-28.**

No Pharaoh, my baby will live! (Acts 7:20-22)

Israel remained free and grew strong in numbers. A new Pharaoh arrived, and action was taken to bind them in servitude and keep them subjected- even by ordering them to abandon their newborn males in the Nile River. *Yet, Israel would continue to thrive in God's favor! See Exodus 1:8-22.*

Despite such horrific circumstances, a Levite man and woman marry. Their love brings forth a male child who they believe is special. It is here the mother decides to defy the Pharaoh and try to save their child's life. *See Exodus 2:1-10.*

Their baby is placed in a reed basket and set on the Nile. Remaining afloat the child comes into the presence of Pharaoh's daughter who is performing her ceremonial bathing before the Nile goddess for fertility and healing. Here the child is later adopted and raised in Pharaoh's house, called Moses (*drawn out*).

See Hebrews 11:23.

Going Deeper: 3) *How did Jealousy between Pharaoh and Israel come to be? What did Pharaoh order to be done to newborn boys? Why did Moses' parents disobey? Is it wrong to ever disobey our leadership? If so, when and why? How does this impact your attitude toward leadership today?*

IV. "Well, that didn't go as I had planned" (Acts 7:23-28)

Between Israel and Egypt (7:23-25)

While Moses understood the anointing over his life, he misunderstood by whose strength would step into it with. Moses sought to move forward in his own wisdom and strength (7:22) and visit his oppressed family. In haste for justice he kills an Egyptian; hoping Israel would realize that as Joseph was their leader into Egypt, he (Moses) would be their deliverer out of Egypt.

Between Israel and Israel (7:26-28)

While there was not an objection to an Egyptian being killed, there was uproar toward Moses for butting into a fight with the effort of helping bring peace. They accuse him of playing both judge and jury in place of Pharaoh and they wanted nothing of it.

Note Hebrews 11:24-26

Going Deeper: 4) *Have you ever had pieces of life work out differently than planned? Its great when its in a good way, but what about a not so good way? Peacemaking is a role we are called to in Jesus but can be just as hard mediating between family in Jesus. How do results affect your efforts of peacemaking in the lives of others?*

V. "From Prince to Fugitive" (Acts 7:29-30)

Moses would then flee the country he had come to know to a place unknown. While Moses may be confused, experiencing a sense of defeat, God is with him and continuing to mold and shape him. An encounter is coming; and faith continues to keep his hand in God's.

Rejections does not slow God down in the slightest.

Redemption is coming!

Check out Hebrews 11:27.

Going Deeper: 5) *Has God made you aware of His anointing over your life? Is there something you feel Him calling you in to, but are experiencing setbacks, defeats, and maybe wondering if you are hearing Him right? How does this example of Moses stir faith in you to continue trusting, waiting, praying, preparing, serving, and celebrating His faithfulness today?*

Stephen again shows the Sanhedrin how he is far from being disrespectful toward Moses or being against what God did through him.

He continues to show how the God of Glory has never left us, is working all things in redemptive stride.

However, the hearts of those seated in judgment are moving in the direction of the brothers, Pharaoh and even Israel at Moses' first step into his role as Deliverer.

Life Principle #1

Faith is not just trusting God with today, but also the tomorrows we may not be here for. Ultimately God's promises reside within His unchanging character and therefore will always come to be. He is the God of Glory!

Life Principle #2

Invest in knowing God, allowing His Spirit to lead you in truth toward the promise of the eternal Kingdom Coming! When facing a decision that is for or against what God commands, may the love you share in Him be enough to choose Him!

Life Principle #3

*Even though life may not be going according to our plans, when we walk with Jesus we are always in His plans. Vision comes, but the journey toward that is full of adventure, mystery, ups and downs, and yes- it may not go according to plan *but that is ok*. Keep walking with Faith in God!*

Life Principle #4

*Do not give up during the desert seasons of life. While unpredictable in their duration, they will give way to the next season. For Moses in Midian, an encounter was going to be right on schedule. **Keep in Prayer, Keep in the Bible, Keep in Community- keep going in Him.***