



THE MESSENGER

APRIL 3, 2022

NEWS AND NOTES

Congregational Meeting
April 10

Weekly Bible Studies
Tuesdays on Zoom, 10
Friday, 12:30, Fayette Mall
food court
Saturday, 10, Panera
(Georgetown)

Times of Service
Sunday

Bible study: 9:45 AM
Worship: 10:45 AM; 6 PM

Wednesday
Bible study: 7:30 PM
(Immediately followed by a
short worship service)

First Friday of Month
Singing
March 4, 7:30

Address and Contact
University Heights Church of
Christ
445 Columbia Ave., Lexington,
KY 40508
(859) 255-6257
www.uheightschurch.com

“DO NOT HOLD THIS SIN AGAINST THEM”

Stephen fell to his knees as the stones crashed against his ruined body. His attackers had done their cruel work well. Stephen was dying. I do not know whether the vision he was granted of Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father (Acts 7:55) continued as they cast him out of the city and began stoning him. If not, his dimming sight would have been filled with the malevolent faces of his murderers. His final statement may indicate this. Regardless, the statement itself demonstrates a number of important points worth consideration.

When one carefully considers the situation, Stephen’s final words become even more striking than at first blush. The “natural person” (fleshly, sensual, selfish, proud, ungodly. See 1 Corinthians 2:14; Romans 8:7; Jeremiah 6:10) responds to hate with hate, violence with violence, and anger with anger. Instances where the “natural person” does not respond in this way tend to be the exception rather than the rule. To face the moment of an unjust death at the hands of hateful people with forgiveness in the heart is foreign to humanity generally. Even if something deep inside the “natural person” recognizes transcendence in such a heart, they have long learned to ignore those pesky pricks of conscience God installed within them.

Yet there *is* something transcendent in the heart of Stephen. It is the result of the transformation God works within His people. (Philippians 2:12-13; Ephesians 3:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 2:13) It is a transformation that must be desired and permitted, for God will not work it apart from our will. This is why we are told to ***let the word of Christ dwell in you richly***, (Colossians 3:16a) to ***strive for...the holiness without which no one will see the Lord***, (Hebrews 12:14) and to ***present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God***. (Romans 12:1) Stephen was not the man he had been before putting on Christ. Perhaps that man had been kind and

Members Needing Our Prayers

Joyce Bolton, Jacob Litmer,
Rick Small, Ralph Fox, Benny
Poynter, Janet Brundige,
Karen Spivey, Rhonda Boyd,
Cindy Bradbury, Paul
Atkisson

Others Needing Prayers

Allison Walker, Dwight Antle,
Randy Cates, Larry McTeer,
Charlene Michael, Ann Little,
Mary Jean Snyder, Mark
Nickles, Dale Lyons, Adam
Fusco, Rachel and Sarah
White, Duane Harrod, Grace
Meyer, Meredith Nicholson,
Alice and Lonnie Anderson,
Glen Perkins, Ethan Shelton,
Terry Daniels, Leroy
Weatherholt, Robert
Brundige, John Blessing,
William Roberts, Paul and
Marrian Lyda, Dana and her
children, Shane (a relative of
Cindi), Ron Harmon, Debbie
Lanphear, Veronica Bowman

To Our Guests

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patient, yet he was not so Christ-like before Christ filled his heart and mind. (Luke 23:34; 1 Peter 2:19-23) Indeed, Christ would *have* to fill a heart for it to be so deeply concerned with the souls of its own executioners.

That Stephen spent the *last* of his strength appealing on their behalf makes this even more astounding. What type of person would do that? Certainly not the humanist. He hates those who cause him needless pain. Certainly not the agnostic who has refused to commit to any belief. His cherished skepticism provides only horrifying doubt at a moment like this. He despises those who have brought him to it. Certainly not the lukewarm Christian. He never took it all that seriously. If he does come to this moment (Which is doubtful. Why would he be willing to die for his “faith”?) his thoughts will not extend beyond his heart’s own worry. Only the heart transformed and remade in the image of Jesus Christ is capable of thinking as Stephen thought. How glorious it is!

Peace and love fill this heart. At the moment of death, it is confident of its salvation, (Romans 8:1; 1 John 5:13) and wants others to have it as well, even those who may unjustly take its life. What an amazing thing! Adam Litmer

Elders	Deacons	Evangelist
Troy Antle	Richard Brundige	Adam Litmer
David Collins	Adam Daniels	
	Adam Litmer	
	Frank Patton	
	Jamie Powell	
	Pat Seabolt	
	Matt Thompson	
	James Weatherholt	

