

THE COST OF DYING WELL

ACTS 7:59 And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” 60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Verse 60 concludes, “When he had said this, he fell asleep.” Death, for the believer, is not an end but a doorway. Stephen closed his eyes to this world and opened them to see the face of His Savior. The sting of death was gone, replaced with the embrace of the One who stood ready to welcome him.

Live filled with the Spirit now.

JOHN 16:13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.

Dying well is not about a single moment of heroism—it is the culmination of a life lived in submission to the Spirit. Stephen’s courage was forged in a life of service and faithfulness. Speak the truth in love. Stephen’s words cut because they were true and Spirit-led. He did not water them down to save himself. Truth without love is harsh; love without truth is hollow. Stephen had both.

Keep your eyes on Christ.

Isaiah 29:13 And so the Lord says, “These people say they are mine. They honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. And their worship of me is nothing but man-made rules learned by rote.

In life and in death, what we gaze upon will determine our peace. Stephen saw the glory of God and the standing Christ, and it steadied him in the storm.

- Stephen quotes Amos 5:25-26, reminding the Sanhedrin that Israel’s ancestors secretly carried “the tent of their king”—a portable shrine to the Ammonite god Molech—even while the visible tabernacle of the LORD was in their midst (Exodus 25:8-9; Numbers 1:50-53).
- This duplicity shows how easily the heart can wander from wholehearted worship, echoing Judges 2:11-13 and Jeremiah 32:35, where Israel “did evil in the sight of the LORD” by serving foreign gods.
- The warning is clear: outward religious activity cannot mask inward compromise (Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:8-9).

Trust God with the results.

2 Corinthians 4:17 For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! 18 So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.

Stephen did not live to see the fruit of his faithfulness. He could not know that Paul would be saved and become the greatest missionary in history. Our role is obedience; God handles the harvest.