

# LIVING A LIFE THAT COULD GET YOU KILLED

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## **Big Idea:**

Where God moves, resistance rises. The people of God must be willing to live with bold obedience, speak truth without compromise, endure slander without fear, keep their eyes on Jesus, and trust that even unjust suffering may be used by God to change the world.

## **1. This is a unique moment, and we must not miss what God is doing**

- We are seeing God move in remarkable ways.
- This is a unique moment in American life.
- There is something unique about Charlie's life.
- What Charlie worked for, prayed for, labored for, and longed for in life, God is now accomplishing in his death.
- The harvest is ripening fast, and we need to know how to act.

## **Illustration: Orchard Harvest**

- Pear harvest started this week.
- Harvest around the house meant:
  - yelling
  - laughing



- talking
  - working
  - tractors coming and going
  - bustle everywhere
- All the work, strain, worry, watering, planting, pruning, stress, bugs, bureaucracies, and everything against the farmer become worth it when harvest comes.
  - When the fruit is ripened on the tree, the time to go is now.
  - When harvest comes, everything else falls to the wayside.
  - Everything becomes subordinate to the singular priority of getting the fruit off the tree.

**Key Emphasis:**

We are in an accelerated season of spiritual harvest.

- There is a ripening of the fields unlike anything seen before.
- This is not a moment to delay.
- This is a moment to act.

## **2. The sermon question: are you living the kind of life that could get you killed?**

- Charlie Kirk could still be alive today.
- He had choices to make.
- He had been warned.
- The death threats had come.



- He knew what he was saying and how he was saying it put him in the crosshairs of radicalized extremists who wanted to shut him up.
- **Yet he chose obedience.**

## Big Idea

Charlie was not offensive, but his message was.

- He was preaching the gospel in everything he did.
- He had the ability to connect the gospel and the Bible to every part of life.
- The gospel is authoritative over every part of life.
- That was what was offensive.

## Key Emphasis

The issue was not that he was obnoxious, violent, or reckless.

- The issue was that he took Christianity outside the walls of the church.
- He went into the marketplace.
- He lovingly, graciously, compassionately, boldly contended for the faith.
- He apprehended lies and said, “No, that’s not right. Why would you think that? Here’s what God says. How does that fit for you?”

## Challenge

- Are you living the kind of life that could get you killed?
- Not by being obnoxious.
- Not by being violent.



- But by choosing obedience in a negative world.

### 3. The goal of the enemy is fear and silence

#### Big Idea

The goal of the enemy is to strike fear in the heart of the church and create a spiral of silence.

- The less people speak up, the steeper the cost for those who do.
- Then an example is made out of the few who speak.
- Then everyone else learns the lesson and shuts up.

#### Key Emphasis

This is how the enemy works:

- fewer voices
- higher cost
- public example
- broader fear  
deeper silence

#### The Irony

Every time Satan has tried this in history, when he publicly kills a Christian martyr, it has the opposite effect.

We fear not the one who can take our life, but the one who can take our life and then judge our life and send our life to hell.

#### Key Emphasis:

We will bow the knee to King Jesus, not to Satan.

### 4. A gut-check for the church and the pulpit

- Some people said Charlie seemed extreme.



- One of the things that made Charlie seem extreme was that pastors and preachers were backing away from saying what he was saying.
- There were less and less people saying what he was saying.
- He preached and proclaimed a clear, simple biblical worldview.
- That is what makes his death so moving, profound, and terrifying.

## Key Emphasis

Christians paying attention hear this and think:

- They shot him for saying the things I say.
- They shot him for believing the things I believe.

That is a gut-check moment.

# EIGHT TRUTHS OF MARTYRDOM

## Truth 1 — Wherever God moves, expect resistance

**Text:** Acts 6:8–10

- Stephen was a man full of God’s grace and power.
- He performed great wonders and signs among the people.
- Amazing things were happening.
- He was preaching the gospel with power.
- He was confronting the lies of the day.
- He was taking captive every evil thought that set itself up against the dominion and authority of God.



- He was doing it publicly.

## Result

- Opposition rose.
- They argued with Stephen.
- They could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke.

## Parallel To Today

What was happening in Charlie's life and ministry was a great move of God.

- More young men were going to church in the demographic he was targeting than at any time before in the history of the nation.
- The 18–25-year-old demographic is the largest demographic of men in the church today.
- Charlie had a large part in that work.

**Where there is a great move of God, there will be resistance.**

## Truth 2 — Jesus makes good on His promise: He will be with you in your moment of need

**Text:** Acts 6:10

- They could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave Stephen as he spoke.
- Jesus promised that when his people stand and are questioned, he will give them what to say.

## Supporting Argument

There was a special grace on Charlie's life.

- He did not merely fall out of bed smart.
- He put in the work.



- Seventy books a year.
- Reading three hours a day.
- Working seven days a week.
- He did more in 31 years than most men will do in many lifetimes.

## **Application inside the sermon**

The word to young people is:

- put in the work
- read
- study
- pursue knowledge
- open the Bible
- grow
- learn
- put yourself under godly mentors
- put yourself in something like Vector West.
- put yourself around men and women who can invest in your life

*When you stand and speak, the Spirit of God draws on everything that has been put in the well so that when you speak, it is living water coming out.*

## **God is where His work is.**

- God is on mission.
- God is on the front lines advancing the kingdom.
- God is not a genie blessing your thing.
- God is asking, “Who will go on my behalf?”
- Those who say, “Here I am, send me,” experience the power of God.

If you are following Jesus and endeavoring to serve Jesus, you have nothing to fear.



- God will make good on His promise.
- When you open your mouth, He will fill it.

## **Truth 3 — The enemy traffics in lies, slander, accusations, and half-truths**

**Text:** Acts 6:11–14

- They secretly persuaded men to say things Stephen never said.
- They stirred up the people, the elders, and the teachers of the law.
- They produced false witnesses.
- They took a little truth and twisted the context and the meaning.

### **Big Idea**

When the enemy cannot match the power of truth in the light, he retreats to dark places.

### **Supporting Arguments**

- secret persuasion
- false witnesses
- narrative shaping
- caricature
- strawman
- red herrings
- public dishonesty with agenda behind it

**A lie gets around the world faster than truth can get out of bed and put its pants on.**

### **Parallel to Charlie**

- People watch a tiny clip, make a judgment, and ignore the full discussion.
- Former leaders and public voices say grossly dishonest things.



- The enemy is trying to smear both the man and the message the man proclaimed.

## Illustration

Modern media:

- print the false headline
- print the retraction later
- millions see the lie
- almost no one sees the correction
- the narrative has already been shaped

Christians who believe in truth must have the discernment to see what is happening.

## Truth 4 — The Bible is not a rule book; it is a story that makes sense out of our story

Text: Acts 7

- The high priest asks, “Are these charges true?”
- Stephen does not tit-for-tat defend himself.
- He preaches the gospel.
- He tells the story of God’s grace throughout the Old Testament.

## Big Idea

Church is not about figuring out all the rules to follow.

Church is about helping people understand the story and where they fit.

## Supporting Argument

Stephen walks through:

- Abraham, Genesis, Joseph, Exodus, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah

**The Bible makes sense out of our story.**



- The earth is fallen.
- All born on the earth are born fallen and sinful.
- God sent a Savior.
- He lived the perfect life we have not lived.
- He died the substitutionary atoning death we deserve.
- He rose to conquer: sin, Satan, death, hell, the wrath of God
- Then He offers that victory free of charge.
- It comes by grace through faith.

## Key Emphasis

Do not first think rules and religion.

Think relationship with the living God.

That is what Stephen was preaching, and that is what Charlie was preaching, and they murdered them both for it: one with stones, one with a bullet

## Truth 5 — Do not give out a free pass to sin in the name of loving the sinner

**Text:** Acts 7:51

- Stephen's sermon ends with application.
- He turns and says, "You stiff-necked people."
- Their hearts and ears are still uncircumcised.
- They always resist the Holy Spirit.
- They persecuted the prophets.



- They betrayed and murdered the Righteous One.
- They received the law and did not obey it.

## Big Idea

He is not confronting them because he hates them.

He is confronting them because he loves them.

- If he does not offend their senses, they will never come to their senses.
- If he does not offend their sin, they will never see their sin.
- If they do not see their sin, they will never look to a Savior for their sin.

## Illustration: Cancer doctor

- A cancer patient goes to the doctor.
- The loving doctor does not say, "I think you're fine."
- The loving doctor says, "You've got a problem. We have to deal with it."

You cannot heal before you wound. Loving sinners does not mean acquiescing to their sin.

- Giving a free pass to sin is not love, that is actually hatred.
- Holding the line of God's Word will get called unloving, but loving is a Christian word that gets used against Christians.

## 10. Truth 6 — To God-haters, truth is like water on a grease fire

**Text:** Acts 7:54

- When the members of the Sanhedrin heard Stephen, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him.



- Everything he said was true.
- Their response to truth was rage.

## **Big Idea**

Truth does not calm God-haters. Truth intensifies what is already in them.

## **Illustration from the sermon**

Say something simple and obvious like “men can’t give birth”, and in this cultural moment it is treated as extremism.

This is a wild time to be alive.

## **Supporting Argument**

- There is a self-authenticating reality to the Word of God.
- Truth exposes.
- Truth provokes.
- Truth reveals what is in the heart.

## **Parallel drawn**

The response to Charlie’s death, and the effort to keep attacking him after death, shows the rage of darkness.

- Killing him was not enough.
- Now there is an attempt to assassinate his character and memory.

## **Key Emphasis**

That rage is evidence of spiritual conflict.



# Truth 7 — When attacked by the mob, look past the mob to Jesus

**Text:** Acts 7:55–56

- Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven.
- He saw the glory of God.
- He saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

## Big Idea

If you look at the mob, fear will rise.  
If you look at Christ, faith will conquer.

## Key Emphasis

Courage is not the antidote to fear.  
Faith is the antidote to fear.

- Faith gives courage an anchor.
- Self-stirred courage is not enough.
- You need someone greater to trust.

## Theological explanation

Jesus is the great High Priest.

- Old Testament priests never sat while on duty.
- Their work was never done.
- Sacrifices continued continually.
- But Jesus died, rose, ascended, and sat down at the right hand of God.
- The priest sat down.



- The work was finished.

## **Illustration**

When Stephen was being stoned, Jesus stood. Jesus gave His first martyr a standing ovation.

## **Parallel**

When Charlie died, maybe Jesus stood again to welcome him into heaven with a hero's welcome.

## **Truth 8 — You can have the applause of man or the applause of God, but you cannot have both**

- Stephen could have recanted.
- That is what they wanted.
- If he recants, they win.
- Instead he preaches his last sermon and leaves the outcome to them.

## **Big Idea**

Whose applause are you living for? God's or man's?

You cannot live for both.

## **Key Emphasis**

This is going to increasingly become a reality in life.

- It is time to reassess the cost of following Jesus again.

## **Parallel to Charlie**

- Charlie knew what it would cost him.
- His life and death now ask the church the same question.



# Your pain or death, no matter how unjust, may result in God changing the world

**Text:** Acts 7:59–8:4

- Stephen prays, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”
- He prays, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.”
- Saul approves of the killing.
- A great persecution breaks out.
- The church is scattered.

## If the story stopped there

- It would be discouraging.
- It would look like defeat.

## But the rest of Acts shows

- The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church.
- The day Stephen was martyred, revival broke out.
- That revival kept spreading like wildfire.
- It went to the ends of the earth.
- It reached this place.

You are here, in part, because Stephen stood with a spine and delivered the truth in the face of great adversity.

**When a tyrant dies, his power ceases. When a martyr dies, his power increases.**



## Parallel to Charlie

- the outpouring of salvation
- the scale of response
- the evangelistic opportunity
- the gospel preached in the wake of public assassination

All of this presented is evidence of martyrdom.

**The church advances steadily through a series of glorious victories cleverly defined as crushing defeat.**

## Final exhortations

### Remember this

- You are bulletproof until God is done with you.
- The church advances through what looks like defeat.
- God may use unjust suffering to change the world.

## Response of the church

### Call 1: Respond for salvation

- Some need to come forward.
- Some need to confess their need for Jesus.
- Some need to place faith in Jesus.
- Some need to say, "I want to follow the same Savior Charlie was following."



## Call 2: Respond in prayer

- Pray for the nation.
- Pray for one more person in your life.
- Pray for a co-worker, friend, or family member.
- Pray for evangelistic opportunity.
- Pray for boldness.
- Pray for more souls won for Christ.

*The enemy thought killing Charlie would make people run away. Instead, people are running toward the faith of the man who was killed for his faith. That is a work of the Spirit of God*

