



# Near and Now

*When My Calling Requires Courage – Stephen*

*By Dr. Apu Seyenkulo*

## Warm Up Question

*Think of a time when you had to stand up for what you believed in, even when it was challenging or risky.*

*What motivated you to take a stand?*

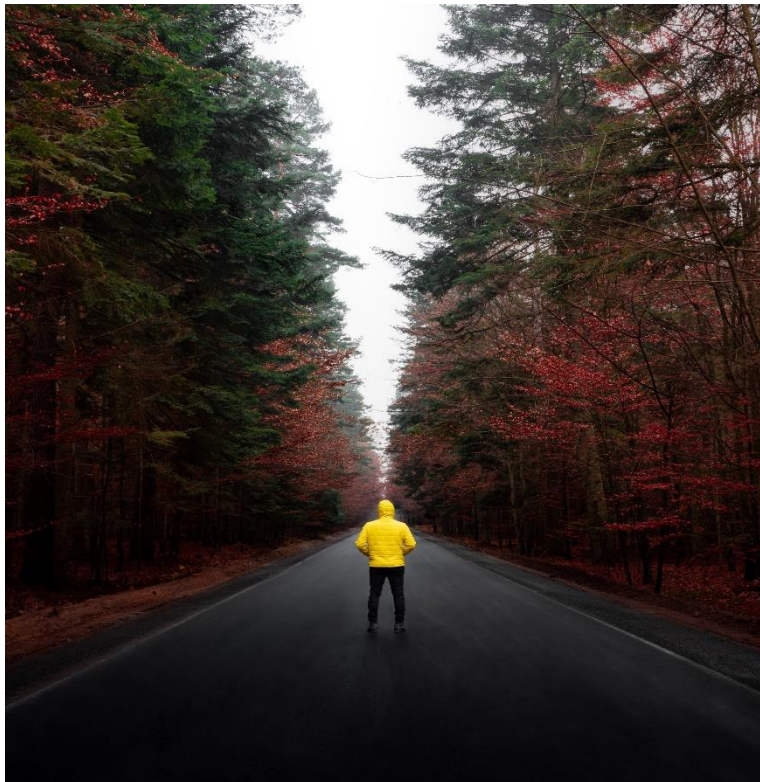


Photo by Mateusz Syta on [Unsplash](#)

## Discussion Questions

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

## Lord Jesus, Receive My Spirit

Read [Acts 7](#)

### Bible Story Reflection

Stephen shows courage and an unwavering commitment to his faith. As he stands before the Sanhedrin, facing the possibility of severe consequences, Stephen reflects and speaks on the history of God's faithfulness and confronts the religious authorities with the truth. Stephen recognizes the role of the past on the present and future Will of God. Empowered by this, he speaks boldly, not holding back in his criticism of their resistance to God's will.

Stephen's remarkable display of courage is evident in his final moments when he cries out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Despite the threats and impending danger, he remains steadfast in his faith and trusts in the Lord to sustain him. Stephen's unwavering conviction in the face of death exemplifies the power of faith to overcome fear and the willingness to sacrifice everything for the sake of the Gospel. In Stephen's story, we find an invitation to embrace courage and conviction in our own faith journey. Like Stephen, we may encounter situations where we need to speak truth to power, even when it is challenging or risky. Stephen's example teaches us that the risks and threats we face should not deter us from standing up for what we believe in. We are called to be bold witnesses for Christ, even in the face of opposition or persecution.

Stephen's story also highlights the importance of relying on God's strength and guidance when we encounter adversity. He found his courage through his deep faith in Jesus Christ. Stephen's unwavering trust in God's presence and provision enabled him to face death with peace and confidence. As we reflect on Stephen's story, let us pray for a willing spirit to speak truth to power, just as he did. May we find the courage to stand firm in our faith, even in the face of risks and threats. Let us rely on God's strength and guidance, trusting that He will sustain us amid challenging circumstances. May our lives reflect the boldness and conviction of Stephen, as we strive to make a difference in the world for the sake of the Gospel.

### Discussion Questions

1. What qualities did Stephen exhibit that made him a powerful witness for Christ?
2. How did Stephen's past contribute to his willingness to speak the truth?
3. What can we learn from Stephen's response to false accusations and opposition?
4. Stephen accuses the religious leaders of resisting the Holy Spirit. How can we apply this lesson to our own lives?
5. Discuss the role of forgiveness in Stephen's story.
6. How does Stephen's martyrdom inspire and challenge us in our own faith journeys?
7. What lessons can we draw from Stephen's example of unwavering faith and commitment to Christ, even in the face of adversity?
8. How do your past trials and tribulations create the person you are today?

## Activity Suggestions

1. Write a reflection on a time when you had to stand up for your faith or speak truth to power. Share it with a trusted friend or group for mutual encouragement.
2. Research and discuss current examples of individuals or communities who are facing opposition or threats due to their faith. How can we support them and learn from their courage?
3. Spend time in prayer, asking God to give you a willing spirit and the courage to intervene when needed. Pray specifically for situations where speaking truth to power can make a positive impact.

## Prayer Concerns

Those facing challenging situations that require courageous intervention, individuals in need of reconciliation and forgiveness, those striving for justice and peace.

## Closing Prayer

Give me a willing spirit to speak truth to power, O God, and sustain me amid the risks and threats that I face. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

