

**SERMON NOTES: JUNE 16<sup>TH</sup>**  
**SCRIPTURE READINGS... Matthew 10: 16-25, Acts 6: 8-15, 7: 44-60**

**ORIGIN OF DEACONS...the Early Church saw dramatic growth: by now it had grown from 3,000 to 8,000. Rapid growth brought NEDDY PEOPLE, among the neediest were WIDOWS who had no source of income. This led to an unexpected crisis: a FOOD SHORTAGE, Greek-speaking widows were getting gipped in their share of food while Hebrew-speaking widows seems to get preferential treatment. Burdened by the demands, Apostles chose 7 men-known as DEACONS-to assist in the food distribution, and one of them was Stephen.**

**STEPHEN'S JOB CHANGE...Stephen didn't just wait table. He did miraculous signs/wonder. Described as a man full of grace/power, his assignment shifted from food distribution to preaching but he caught the eyes of surprising critics: members of his own synagogue, maybe friends. They drag him before the same council who earlier had arrested Peter/John.**

**ACT'S LONGEST SPEECH...Stephen caused a stir before opening his mouth "his face was as bright as Angel's" The High Priest interrogates him; he offers Act's longest speech: a virtual tour of Jewish history from Abraham/Moses, David/Solomon, the building of Temple. Who was this unauthorized nobody teaching them? They wanted retraction; what they got was a sermon: not from Stephen's mind but God's heart. His bullet points were all bullets.**

**YOU BOAST OF A LAND YOU DIDN'T CONQUER, A LAW YOU DIDN'T KEEP AND A STONE BUILDING THAT WOULDN'T CONTAIN GOD'S LITTLE FINGER. He was walking on landmines: Torah/Jerusalem/Temple were SACRED COWS to Jews, but SACRED COWS make GOOD HAMBURGERS. God was too big to be put in boxes.**

**GRINDING THEIR TEETH...they ground their teeth, Luke says, Stephen cut them to the core. They were enraged and their rage served to prove his point. They cared more about protecting their status than serving God. Beware of false pride. It would rather KILL TRUTH than to CONSIDER IT. He didn't have a DEATH WISH. It's what happens when we climb too far out on a limb. People like him forget the one thing that we mustn't forget: HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF, PLAY IT SAFE, HOLD OUR TONGUE. WE KNOW HOW TO PLAY IT SAFE BUT DO WE KNOW HOW TO ACT LIKE PEOPLE IN LOVE Incapable of straight talk, they stone Stephen to death- the first but not last of many Christian martyrs.**