



DAILY BREAD

FOR THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 5, 2010

This week's assigned reading: Acts 7 and 8.

Comments on the assigned reading:

- Stephen is the first person martyred on behalf of his faith (Acts 6:8 – 8:1a). He was one of the seven deacons chosen to administer the distribution to the widows (Acts 6:1-7). The word "martyr" is a Greek word, and it means "witness". In our popular usage today, a martyr is someone who makes the point of letting everyone know how hard they work to make others comfortable and happy, or those who work hard at thankless and selfless pursuits. In ancient times, however, a martyr was one who gave witness to their faith, and they were willing to be put to death rather than take back their testimony. This courage so impressed people in the Roman Empire that they were inspired to also come to faith in Jesus Christ.
- Stephen's crime that got him killed is that he committed blasphemy by claiming to have a personal vision of the living Christ seated in heaven at the right hand of God (7:56). Jesus was also accused of blasphemy in his trial before the religious authorities. There are other parallels to Jesus' Passion in the Stephen's trial. For example, both commended their spirit into God's hands (Luke 23:46 and Acts 7:59).
- The conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26-40) is the first conversion of someone not of the nation of Israel, and also very likely a Gentile even if he was interested in Judaism.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

1. What are you willing to die for? Your family? Your country? Your faith? Share what's most important to you above all else in life.
2. The Holy Spirit led Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch, and their conversation resulted in the Ethiopian coming to faith in Jesus Christ. To whom is the Holy Spirit leading Galilee Lutheran Church? To whom is the Holy Spirit leading you?

Suggestions for prayer:

- We remember the international team of Christians who were engaged in a humanitarian medical mission in Afganistan who were recently killed by extremists. Pray for those Christians who die for their faith all around the world.
- Pray for our congregational leaders, especially the GLOW Planning Team which meets on Tuesday and the Church Council which meets on Thursday.
- Pray for all those who serve in many roles in our worship services. Especially thank God for the Altar Guild which has their annual potluck dinner and meeting on Wednesday.