

# SUNDAY RECAP | CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH

The *Sunday Recap* is a quick rundown of our time of worship together on Sunday and a quick look ahead. Our hope is that this will help us continue to reflect on the good news of the gospel all week long. Enjoy!

RECAP FOR: SUNDAY MARCH 18, 2018

Lent Devotionals:

[Redeemer Presbyterian Lenten Devotional](#) (can import to your ical calendar)

[Living Through Dying: 6-week Community Guide Through Lent](#) by Saturate

## PREPARE FOR NEXT SUNDAY

// Call to Worship //

L: As we are called into worship today,

it is sobering to remember

that when God appeared on earth in the person of Jesus, most of the world did not recognize him and therefore did not worship him.

Today we ask for faith that will open our eyes

to see Jesus for who he is,

that we might worship him in truth.

People of God, behold and see your God!

C: We open our eyes to see his glory.

We open our ears to hear his wisdom.

We open our hands to offer him gifts.

We open our mouths to sing his praise.

We open our hearts to offer him our love. He is Lord!

// Prayer of Confession //

L: Loving God, you rode a donkey and came in peace,

humbled yourself and gave yourself for us.

C: We confess our lack of humility.

L: As you entered Jerusalem, the crowds shouted "Hosanna: 'Save us now!'"

On Good Friday they shouted "Crucify!"

C: We confess our praise is often empty. We sing "Hosanna," but cry "Crucify."

L: As the crowd laid their palms in front of you, you took no glory for yourself.

C: We confess that we want to be accepted and take the easy way. We do not stay true to your will.

Forgive us, Lord, and help us to follow in the way of obedience. Amen.

// Assurance of Pardon //

"Seek the LORD while he may be found;

call upon him while he is near;

let the wicked forsake his way,  
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;  
let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him,  
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.  
- Isaiah 55:6-7

L: In Christ, God answers us and sets us free!  
**C: In Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!**

// Passing of the Peace //

But now you belong to Christ Jesus. Though you once were far away from God, now you have been brought near to him because of the blood of Christ. He has broken down the wall of hostility that used to separate us. Together as one body, Christ reconciled us to God by means of his death, and our hostility toward each other was put to death. - Ephesians 2:13, 14b, & 16

// Benediction //

L: May God fill your heart with such love for Him that you find yourself telling others of how amazing Jesus is. For He has lived for you, He has died for you, and He has raised to new life for you. Go now in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.  
Peace be with you!  
**C: And Also with you!**

## REFLECT ON LAST SUNDAY

// Call to Worship //

L: All who gather here, rejoice!  
You have tried to shake off your sin, erase it, or at the very least forget it, but come, see what Christ has done!

**C: Come, let us see together!**

L: The Lord has fulfilled the law; you need no longer live under its shadow!

**C: Let us rejoice in the Lord together!**

L: Come, for Christ the Lord offers you new life in his Spirit.

**C: Come, let us gather in this Spirit and enjoy what Christ has done!**

Song: [Be Thou My Vision](#)

Song: [Man of Sorrows](#)

// Prayer of Confession //

L: Merciful God, we open our hearts to you and to each other.

**C: Search us, Lord. Bring us into an honest space for contemplation.**

L: When we look within, what we see is sometimes too painful to bear.

**C: Let us examine our hearts with courage and truth.**

L: When we look within, we see anger.

C: We burn with self-righteousness. We make enemies of our neighbors, turning away from love and towards cold stubbornness.

L: When we look within, we see numbness and lack of conviction.

C: We stumble through life half-asleep.

L: When we look within, we see greed.

C: We ignore those close to us in need.

L: When we look within, we see despair.

C: We see the brokenness of the world, and we let our hope die out.

This is our pain when we look within, Lord. How will we bear it?

// Assurance of Pardon //

L: The Lord keeps no record of sins. We are the ones who keep records. The Lord keeps nothing, and offers everything.

C: With the Lord, there is full forgiveness, welcome, embrace, unwavering presence, even in all our weaknesses and failings. There is peace for the angry, wakefulness for the numb, selflessness for the greedy, and hope for the despairing.

L: Family, may we lean into these promises, taking them on and reminding one another when we forget.

C: We will aid one another in this new life. We will lower ourselves to service with Christ, enter into suffering with Christ, and share in the glory of Christ. Amen.

Song: [Give Me Faith](#)

// Passing of the Peace //

The glory of the gospel is that even though we deserve separation from God forever- because of our sin against Him and one another- through Christ we receive His love. Where there was hostility, there is now peace. And we share that peace together as God's family. Take a minute to greet one another with the peace of Christ.

Sermon: "The Death of Stephen and the Triumph of the Gospel", Acts 6:8-8:1

Song: [Nothing But The Blood](#)

// Benediction //

L: And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Philippians 4:19-20)

Peace be with you!

C: And Also with you!

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**Scripture to Meditate On:**

Acts 7:55-56 But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

**Quote to consider:**

*The law says, "It's not me, it's you!"*

### Reflection Questions:

- In our Assurance of Pardon this week we heard “The Lord keeps no record of sins. We are the ones who keep records. The Lord keeps nothing, and offers everything”, how do you “keep records of sins” (both yours and others)? Why do you keep records? What are you secretly hoping will result from that? Do you keep more records of your sins or others sins that affect you?
- Is God’s Law still important to us? Why or why not?
- Pastor Ryan mentioned that Stephen preached a gospel that included both the forgiveness of sins and the gift of righteousness, explain that. Why are both those necessary?
- How can you recognize if you are living as if you still need to fulfill the law yourself?
- Think about Romans 8:3–4 “For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do.” and explain what you think it means.

### Heidelberg Catechism- Question 12

Q. According to God’s righteous judgment we deserve punishment both now and in eternity: how then can we escape this punishment and return to God’s favor?

A. God requires that his justice be satisfied. Therefore the claims of this justice must be paid in full, either by ourselves or by another.

### Suggested Resources

Articles: [Why Does Anyone Become Christian](#) by Tim Keller

[Tom, Time, and they Tyranny of Perfection](#) by Nick Lannon

[The Advocate](#) by Jessica Thompson

[Heavenly Righteousness](#) by CFW Walther

Video: [Jesus and His Active Obedience](#) (4 mins) by RC Sproul

## QUESTIONS FOR KIDS

Here is a *helpful (and short!)* article for how parenting with the law and gospel works:

<https://www.crossway.org/articles/human-obedience-vs-passive-righteousness/>

### [New City Catechism - Question 7](#)

Q: What does the law of God require?

A: Personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience; that we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love our neighbor as ourselves. What God forbids should never be done and what God commands should always be done.

### [New City Catechism Question 13](#)

Q: Can anyone keep the law of God perfectly?

A: Since the fall, no mere human has been able to keep the law of God perfectly, but consistently breaks it in thought, word, and deed.

- Why do we need Jesus to live the perfect life for us?
- Do you ever keep track of your sins? Do you ever keep track of how much someone else sins? If God loves us because of Jesus, why would we keep track of our sin?
- How do you know God loves you? (A: something like “Because he sent Jesus to die for me!”)

## **Sermon Review**

**Title:** Service in Christ

**Text:** Acts 6:8-8:1

**Watch:** <https://cccplainfield.org/sermon/death-stephen-triumph-gospel/>

**Podcast:** <https://cccplainfield.org/subscribe-to-podcast>

### **Sermon Overview:**

We've already been introduced to Stephen as he is one of the seven chosen to serve in 6:5. In 6:8 he is said to be "full of grace and power" and "doing many signs among the people". The religious establishment isn't really happy about this so they get some people to falsely accuse him of two things- speaking against the temple and the law (6:13). This gets Stephen a date before the council where the High Priest asks him, "Are these charges true?" (7:1), and then Stephen begins his lengthy and powerful speech.

### ***Sermon Summary: The Righteousness of Jesus alone earns our forever favor with God.***

Let's consider three things Stephen touches on in his speech:

1. A Misunderstanding (about the temple)
2. A Misjudgment (about their ability)
3. A Pattern (rejecting God's deliverer)

#### **1. A Misunderstanding about the Temple**

In verse 44 Stephen addresses the accusation that he is against the temple by saying the temple isn't necessary to find God and gives examples from Old Testament history. Abraham met God, he didn't have a temple. God met with Joseph in Egypt, Joseph didn't have a temple. God met with Moses in the burning bush, there was no temple there. Even after the temple was built God told us He wouldn't be confined to a temple (Acts 7:48- quoting from Isaiah 66). The temple was important but it was there to teach the people what it took to meet with God (holiness, blood sacrifice, etc.)

#### **2. A Misjudgment about their ability**

Rejecting the temple would lead to the next accusation of rejecting the law, or so they thought. The logic goes something like this: no temple, no place to make sacrifices, sacrifices were for transgressions against the law, therefore, you are saying the law is obsolete.

Stephen's response is that they never obeyed the law anyway (you can imagine that wasn't too popular with the Jewish elite). Stephen says they rejected the law under Moses (7:38-39), they were idol worshipers under Aaron (7:41-42), and Amos even called you idol worshipers (7:42-43). If the law is what saves us, Stephen says, we are in big trouble! The problem, however, is NOT with the law, but with us!

#### **3. A Pattern of rejecting God's deliverer**

As if that weren't enough, Stephen now shows how the history of God's people is a consistent rejecting of the deliverer God sends. God sent Joseph, his family rejected him and sold him into slavery. Moses was rejected and had to flee into the wilderness to save his life. David was appointed King and spends much of his life a fugitive and fleeing for his life.

Then in 7:51-53 Stephen summarizes his speech by stating the religious people are hard hearted and deaf ("uncircumcised in heart and ears), meaning their so-called spirituality is merely external. Inside they are dead and full of hate. Stephen does however give a solution to these issues in 7:53. Although the people are unrighteous, he mentions there is a "Righteous One". There is one who completely fulfilled the law- Jesus of Nazareth. Through his life, through his death, He lives the law perfectly. He is

not the next righteous one. The others in the history of God's people weren't righteous ones. Only Jesus is the Righteous One, there are no others.

Now we know what is needed to be welcomed in by God. We need complete righteousness. And since we are all hard hearted law breakers, we need two things- payment for our unrighteousness, and fulfillment of all righteousness. Forgiveness alone only gets us to a neutral position, that doesn't mean we have fulfilled the law. We need both the death of Jesus for our sin (payment) and we need the life of Jesus for our righteousness. That is the gospel message handed down from Jesus to the Apostles to the church.

Luke tells us two times that Saul was there to hear this message and watch Stephen die. Commentators on this passage have noted that the theology we see in the writings of Paul (Saul's new name after he meets Jesus and comes to faith) comes from this speech from Stephen. It is this speech from Stephen that gave Paul the base material for him to work out in his New Testament letters. With that understanding it is hard to understate the impact this speech had on the world. Paul's letters have changed the world, Stephen's speech and his proclamation of the gospel is the foundation for that.

The last interesting thing from this passage is what Stephen sees before he dies. In 7:55-56 he sees "the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." We might wonder why Jesus was standing. Why wasn't he sitting on His throne? The thought is that Jesus is standing because he is acting as the mediator between God and man and pleading to God why Stephen is theirs. Jesus righteousness is Stephen's. Jesus death has paid for Stephen's sin. Stephen is to be welcomed by God because he is Christ's. As commentator FF Bruce said- While Stephen was confessing Christ before men, he sees Christ confessing Stephen before God"

#### Concluding Questions:

Have you received Stephen's message?

- Do you understand yourself as a Jesus rejecter?
- Do you know of His sacrificial death for your sin? Or are you trying to pay penance for your sin apart from receiving his death?
- Do you know of His perfection as your righteousness? Or are you trying to create your own apart from Him?