



Daily Reflections

April 16, 2018

Scripture

Acts 6: 8-15

Stephen, filled with grace and power,
was working great wonders and signs among the people.
Certain members of the so-called Synagogue of Freedmen,
Cyreneans, and Alexandrians,
and people from Cilicia and Asia,
came forward and debated with Stephen,
but they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke.
Then they instigated some men to say,
“We have heard him speaking blasphemous words
against Moses and God.”
They stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes,
accosted him, seized him,
and brought him before the Sanhedrin.
They presented false witnesses who testified,
“This man never stops saying things against this holy place and the law.
For we have heard him claim
that this Jesus the Nazorean will destroy this place
and change the customs that Moses handed down to us.”
All those who sat in the Sanhedrin looked intently at him
and saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Our Scripture Reflection

St. Luke illustrates vividly in his second volume of Acts a parallel between the passion and death of Jesus and that of His disciples. In today's text we read that false accusations were brought against Stephen. He is said by the Jewish leaders to be blasphemous in his speech. His response? The same response his Lord had given to the accusations against Himself....nothing. He, like Jesus, trusted that his Heavenly would take care of him. And He did.

Food for your Journey

I find it interesting that many outstanding companies expect their employees to experience more failures than successes. The corporate thinking is that talented, energetic and creative people who continue trying (and failing) will eventually also succeed. The company's leaders want to know who's out there energetically failing and succeeding because those are the people who will prove most valuable to the organization. I have a feeling God may rather like that kind of logic.

The reason I believe that might be God's mind, too, is because if I were to take that business philosophy and apply it to my spiritual experience, I'd have to admit I learn more from failure than from success. Being crushed and melted in God's refinery has caused me to lean more fully into him than success ever has. And as I look back on my failures I see his loving and healing hand in them all. I also see him lifting me up and prodding me on.

Scripture speaks repeatedly of the failures of many of God's people. Abraham lied in a pinch; David had a wandering eye and a murderously scheming heart. Yet in spite of their failures Abraham was called the friend of God and David was described as a man after God's heart.

Broken persons who fail seem to win the heart of the Father. But that description seems to fit everyone, doesn't it?

—Marilyn Meberg, *The Women of Faith Daily Devotional* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002), 34.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, You never said that being Your disciple would be easy. Instead, You called me to pick up my cross and walk in Your footsteps. When it becomes difficult to do so, strengthen me with Your Grace and never let me falter. Amen.