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FROM SERVANT TO MARTYR

In Acts 6:1-7 we discover that God raised up some deacons, so the 12 apostles (Matthias took Judas' place) could spend time studying the word of God. They were, namely: Stephen who was called a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, Philip, and Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas. They were to wait on tables and take care of the widows and orphans. They were called to serve, or the Greek word diakoneo which means deacon or deaconess in the English language.

Yet, they did not just "wait on tables." The requirements for them to "serve" were to be of an honest report, full of the Holy Ghost (Spirit filled), and full of wisdom. These were not just ordinary church goers. They were passionate about the Lord and dedicated to do whatever God called them to.

In chapter 7 we see Stephen. He was brought before the religious Jewish council because they had been debating about Stephen doing great wonders and miracles among the people. He disputed with wisdom with the Libertines, Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those of Cilicia. These people were not able to resist the wisdom of Stephen. The council brought Stephen in and listened to him preach starting with the exile in Egypt, how Moses brought them out, and how the forefathers (Jews) did not obey. He then said, in Acts 7:51, ***"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."***

This did not sit well with the "religious leaders," so they consented to put Stephen to death. Did he fight it? No, in fact he said, in Acts 7:60 as he was being stoned, he called upon the Lord Jesus and said, ***"...Lord, lay not this sin to their charge..."***

From servant to martyr, Stephen became the first martyr of the early church. He gave his all. In the days ahead those that are sold out to serving God may also be martyred. Stephen shared the truth, and we must do the same. Lost souls are depending upon our voice.