

That Day

by Shane Blake and Garrett Hughes

[male voice off stage]

... That's about it friend. Be cheerful. Keep things in good repair. Keep your sprit up. Do all that, and the God of love and peace shall be with you for sure. All the brothers and sisters here say hello. The amazing grace of the master, Jesus Christ, the extravagant love of God, the intimate friendship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

[woman]

Thanks Paul. [to audience] Paul has come such a long way since I first met him. Well, I didn't really meet him, but I sure knew who he was. He was there that day, the day my husband... the day he...

You know, it's funny what things will remind you of someone. The way Paul writes in his letters... it sounds just like what my husband might have said. He was so good to us, gentle, always a kind word for a stranger. No wonder he was chosen to take care of the widows. He had a good head on him, too. He knew how to use the talents he was given, no matter how small the task at hand.

Some said he was no more than a glorified storekeeper, but he never let that get him down. You remember that story Jesus told about the men and the coins, and how one man just buried his in the sand? That would never have been my Stephen. He worked so hard at every little thing the twelve asked him to do. No matter what it cost... Even if it meant he would ...

He stood so tall and proud that day. He loved Christ so much, he just couldn't keep quite. He wouldn't just get up there and shout like some men did. He had studied, and knew what those religious leaders needed to hear. He knew the old stories better than they did. Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah and how they pointed to the coming of Christ. He was so full of the Spirit. You could just see the righteous anger on his face when they... as they started to...

I almost started laughing when he called them bullheaded and said they must have calloused hearts. They didn't laugh, not even a smile. As they started shouting you could hear my Stephen say "I see heaven wide open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." That's when they took him outside the gate of the city. He didn't fight them. I think he knew that he was speaking his own death sentence, but the Spirit would not let him be silent. He was praying when they started, not for a way out, not that they would stop. He was praying for them, for God to forgive them... stone after stone... after stone... after... then he slept.

People said that he looked like an angel that day. To me, he always did. They said, "Miriam, that Stephen only has eyes for you." Truth is, he only had eyes for God. And I'm glad I can say I love Christ even more for it all. My Stephen was a servant up to the end. I always like to think Stephen's devotion was one of the things that helped Paul trust Christ. I watched him stand there that day, holding their coats and cheering them on. Now I stand here, holding the letters he sends and cheering him on as best I can. He reminds me that my Stephen's death was not in vain. Neither was his life, for with his life, and death, he served his family, his friends, and most importantly, he served God will all his body, mind, and soul.