

A Living Martyr

by Steve Higginbotham

“Stephen wasn’t a martyr because he died; he died because he was a martyr.”

After reading that sentence, you may be saying, “Steve, I don’t get it. What do you mean?” Well let me see if I can explain.

Did you know that the Greek word translated as “martyr” (Gr. *martureo*) is the same Greek word that is also translated as “witness” and “testimony?”

What does that mean? It means that Jesus sent out his disciples to be (Gr. *martureo*) i.e. “witnesses/testifiers/martyrs” (Luke 21:13; Acts 1:8). But how were his disciples supposed to be “witnesses/testifiers/martyrs?” By faithfully recounting the things they saw and heard about Jesus. And as we know, some faithful “witnesses/testifiers/martyrs” were even called upon to forfeit their lives as did Stephen (Acts 22:20) and Antipas (Revelation 2:13).

You see, Stephen’s death was a result of his decision to be a “witness/testifier/martyr” of Jesus. His death didn’t make him a “witness/testifier/martyr” of Jesus, his death was the result of being a “witness/testifier/martyr” for Jesus.

Friends, I hope you’re already a “martyr” for Jesus. And if someday being a martyr for Jesus demands we must also die for him, I pray that we all have the courage and conviction to do so. Give it some thought.