



# The Church At Its Best

THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

NOVEMBER 16, 2025

# The Persecuted Church





# The Persecuted Church



What  
Stephen  
Said

What  
Stephen  
Saw

What  
Stephen  
Did



What  
Stephen  
Said

**<sup>54</sup> When they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him.**

What  
Stephen  
Saw

**<sup>57</sup> They cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him.**

What  
Stephen  
Did

**<sup>58</sup> Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him.**



What  
Stephen  
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What  
Stephen  
Saw

What  
Stephen  
Did

**<sup>51</sup> You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. <sup>52</sup> Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, <sup>53</sup> you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.**



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**<sup>55</sup> Full of the Holy Spirit, [Stephen] gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.**

**<sup>56</sup> He said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”**



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**<sup>58</sup> Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.**

**<sup>8:1</sup> And Saul approved of his execution.**



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<sup>59</sup> And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, **receive my spirit.**”  
<sup>60</sup> And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, **do not hold this sin against them.**” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.



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Expect It



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**“Stephen did everything right  
and he ended up dead”  
J. D. Greear.**



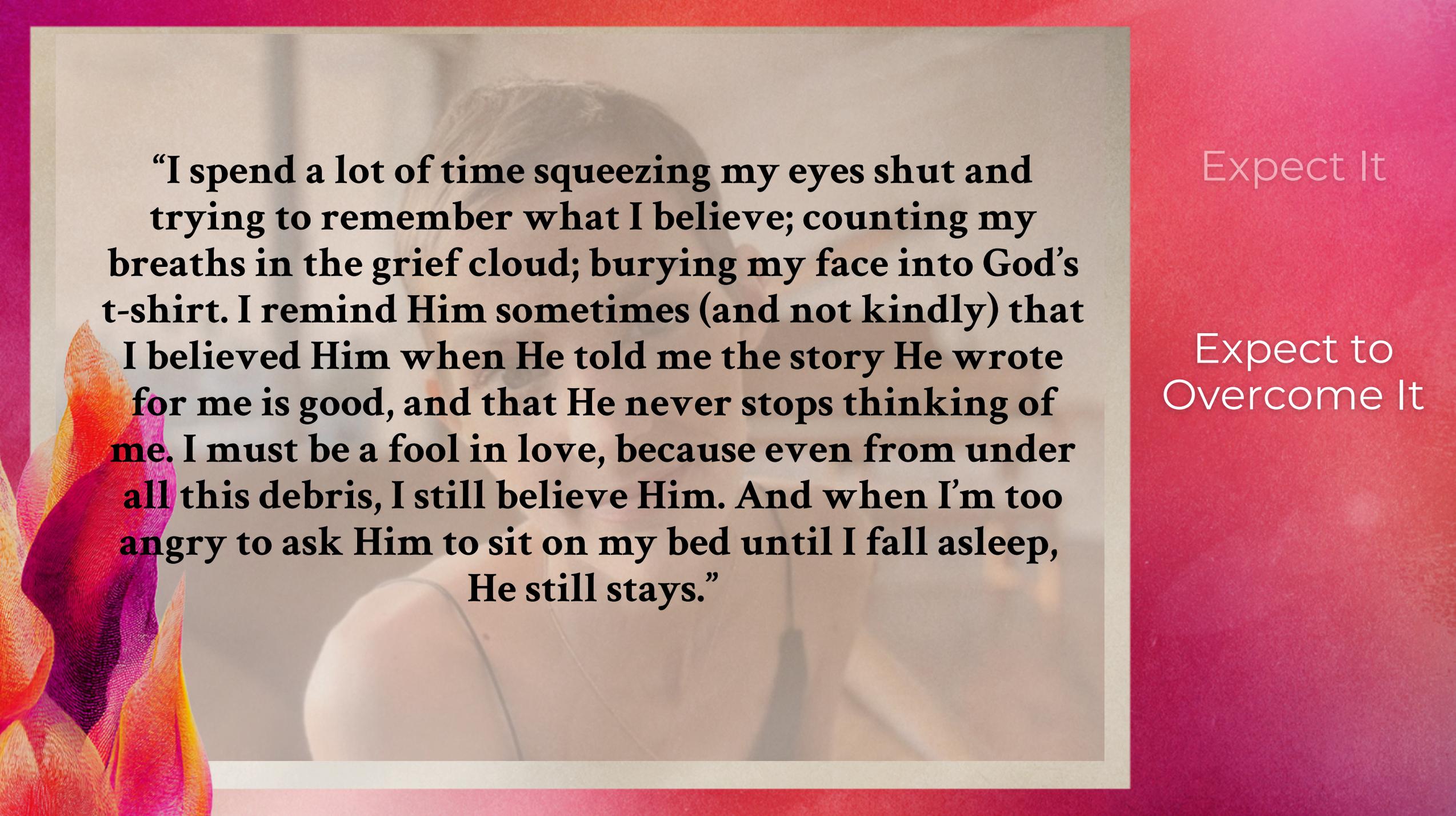
Expect It

Expect to  
Overcome It



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Overcome It



**“I spend a lot of time squeezing my eyes shut and trying to remember what I believe; counting my breaths in the grief cloud; burying my face into God’s t-shirt. I remind Him sometimes (and not kindly) that I believed Him when He told me the story He wrote for me is good, and that He never stops thinking of me. I must be a fool in love, because even from under all this debris, I still believe Him. And when I’m too angry to ask Him to sit on my bed until I fall asleep, He still stays.”**

Expect It

Expect to  
Overcome It



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Expect God  
to Use It



**8:1** And there arose  
on that day a great  
persecution against  
the church in  
**Jerusalem**, and they  
were all scattered  
throughout the  
regions of **Judea**  
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regions of **Judea**  
and **Samaria**.

<sup>1:8</sup> But you will  
receive power when  
the Holy Spirit has  
come upon you, and  
you will be my  
witnesses in  
**Jerusalem** and in all  
**Judea and Samaria**,  
and to the end of  
the earth.”

Expect It

Expect to  
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**Take a risk for Christ**





# The Church At Its Best

A SERIES ON ACTS