

Pastor Jason Mecum | Acts 7 | 06.04.2023
Replay message at: <http://www.northpointeFL.org/messages>

This morning, Pastor Jason Mecum took us through Acts 7 and the trial and death of Stephen. It was his death that brings us to Saul, who we also know as Paul.

Pastor Jason spoke about how Paul refers to a “thorn in his flesh” that was put there by God to keep him humble. **2 Corinthians 12:7** says, “So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. (ESV)”.

Paul carries shame from something in his past. Paul also acknowledges that shame is coming from Satan. Is there something in your life that you are ashamed of– something that Satan is using to harass you?

Sometimes we allow our own shame or pride to overcome what we could do for God’s Kingdom. This is Satan’s goal. This was a “thorn” for Paul. Instead of allowing this moment to define him and trip him up he chose to live a life for God. Paul was able to use that shame as a way to not be conceited but still bring glory to God. He allowed God to lead his life instead of letting Satan make him hide.

- Are there thing(s) you carry from your past that make your walk with God harder?
- Have you ever felt like you couldn’t share the Gospel with someone because of things in your past?
- How do you overcome those feelings of shame or regret?

Pastor Jason said that as he was being killed, Stephen didn’t curse these men or fight back. Instead, he prayed for them, as Jesus did at the cross. He then asked us “What effect did this prayer have on a young Saul?” St. Augustine (one of the greatest Christian philosophers of the early church) once wrote, “If Stephen had not prayed, the Church would not have had Paul.”

- Have you ever prayed for the people who reject you?
- Have you prayed for people who reject God?

Imagine if your prayers for those people lead to someone becoming a person chasing after God and fighting FOR Him instead of against Him.