

“Life to the World”

In today’s Gospel, Jesus begins His beautiful “Bread of Life” discourse, identifying himself as *“the bread of God... which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”* Those who feed on this Bread *“will never hunger”* and those who believe in Him *“will never thirst.”*



What a contrast between the Good Shepherd and the religious leaders of our ongoing readings from the Acts of the Apostles... Fearful, controlling, easily angered, jealous, threatening, scheming – these are some of the sad traits they exhibited. They were also self-righteous, quite certain of their moral superiority. Thus, they could not bear to hear criticism, least of all from someone they did not respect. Enter Stephen, one of the first seven deacons, who called them out with strong language. True to form, they were infuriated and this quickly led to Stephen’s stoning and his humble distinction as the first Christian martyr.

Note how Stephen’s final words mirrored Christ’s on the Cross: *“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit... Lord, do not hold this sin against them.”* Occasionally, we too encounter those who may seem quite “beyond our reach.” Whether it’s a personality flaw or hardness of heart, they simply cannot see the error of their ways or any need to change. Any efforts on your part are seen as an assault. Convinced of their own self-righteousness, they

can become both defensive and aggressive. In such times, do not lose heart, but simply lift them (and yourself) up to the Just Judge, the Good Shepherd who *“gives life to the world.”*

Peace,

Dcn Ron

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<http://usccb.org/bible/readings/042820.cfm>