

Calvary Chapel on the Horizon
September 5, 2021
Acts 6:1-7 “The Church Needs Servants”

I. Introduction

READ: Eph 4:1-3 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Let's Pray...

There was a church in Dallas years ago that decided to split...they started in the civil courts for possession of the property but ended up being redirected by the civil court to a church court.

The church court delved into what really started the church split and it came out that at a church dinner, an elder was given a smaller piece of ham than the child in line ahead of him...

How trivial and embarrassing it is for the church at large – and for the individual, when personal feelings are allowed to guide the movement of the church as opposed to the Holy Spirit and the Word of God!

These types of events cause the world to look in and laugh. And what's worse, in this story, the one with the hurt feelings was an elder – someone who is supposed to know better and be an example to the flock!

- † Today we will look at a second attempt by Satan to destroy the church the inside – by bringing division to the body and distraction to the leadership.
- † Recall last week that we looked at the account of Ananias and Sapphira and their hypocrisy by lying to the Holy Spirit...and how, when dealt with appropriately, the church feared God and was strengthened and grew.
- † But, had this thing not been dealt with it would have allowed an impurity and un-holy influence in that could have destroyed all that God had begun...

II. Help Wanted: Servants (Deacons)

A. Contention

Act 6:1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

- † This was a new problem...there was either preference being shown, or what was more probable was that there were so many that the Greek widows were simply being missed. They were probably more humble – and the “squeaky wheel gets the grease!”

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† **And...it could have brought about wholesale division...**

† **BUT! It is still not a reason or a justification for murmuring!**

- **Php 2:14-15** Do all things without murmurings and disputings: (15) That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

† **Satan, however, is continuing to seek destruction in the church from the inside!**

- **Pro 13:10** Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.
- **Remember, Pride is taking thought for yourself!**

B. Roles and Responsibilities

Acts 6:2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

† **The Apostles knew their role: but the inference here is that the people expected them to oversee or take-over the distribution.**

† **But...their calling was to the ministry of the Word...**

† **The Apostles were “Not” to “Serve Tables” – Diakoneo**

1. to be a servant, attendant, domestic, to serve, wait upon
2. to take care of the poor and the sick, who administer the office of a deacon
3. in Christian churches to serve as deacons

† **This isn’t to say that waiting tables was beneath them – it just wasn’t their calling. Each of us must keep the focus on our own individual calling.**

Acts 6:3-4 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

† **So, the Apostles desired that 7 men – FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT and OF GOOD REPORT – be chosen to oversee the “business” of the church.**

† **The idea behind **full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom** is that these men should be both *spiritually* minded and *practically* minded. This can be a hard combination to find!**

† **Whom we may appoint:** The final decision rested with the apostles. They asked the

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congregation to nominate the men (**seek out from among you**), but the decision really rested with the apostles. This was not an exercise of congregational government, though the apostles wisely wanted and valued the input from the congregation.

- † **Whom we may appoint over this business:** Seven men will be chosen to **serve tables**. It was simple, practical service that they are appointed to; yet they must be well qualified for this as well, especially because of the danger of division.
- † Therefore, the men need to be **of good reputation**. They had to be men the church family felt confident in.
- † **This is notable: those chosen to simply “Serve” the people had to be full of the Holy Spirit and could not be hypocrites or immature “wild men”. Rather, they were to be “...of good report”!**
- † **Paul expounds on the qualifications of a deacon:**

1Ti 3:8-13 Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; (9) Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. (10) And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. (11) Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. (12) Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. (13) For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

C. The Heart of a Servant

- † **Our Application: It’s worthy to discuss a servant for our lives...we are all to be servants for Christ! We find great insight as we seek to understand the heart and role of a servant:**
 - **Mar 10:45** For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.
 - **Luk 17:7-10 (NKJV)** And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? (8) But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'? (9) Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. (10) So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.' "
 - **We must cultivate the attitude that by serving others, we are serving the Lord!**

- 1. Application: We must *not* look at our *rights*, rather we must *look* at our *responsibilities*!**

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- **Luk 9:23-24** Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. (24) For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.
 - **Mat 22:37-39** Jesus said to him, 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' (38) This is the first and great commandment. (39) And the second is like it: 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'
 - **Love is not a feeling, it is an action – loving your neighbor places the focus on our responsibility, not on their right to expect us to love them.**
- 2. Marriage: Apply this to Marriage: We should give to our spouses / not take from them. If we are giving as we should, our needs will be met by them if they have the same servant's heart!**
- **1Co 6:19-20** What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (20) For ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

3. The Chosen

Act 6:5-6 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: (6) Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

† **Then they prayed and laid hands on them and set them to work.**

† **One of the important aspects of the church is delegation...there should not be one or a few people doing all the work! And those called to minister the Word should not be taken away to do things others could do...**

† **The church is the body of Christ and as such – we should all be serving in one way or another. One of the things I have observed over the years is service without commitment – “I’ll serve as long as I want” – not “I’ll serve until the Lord directs me otherwise”.**

† **And I’ll challenge you...if you don’t want to serve in the body then there is an issue between you and Jesus...**

† **Jesus gave His all for us and calls us to give our all to Him...are we? This isn’t a guilt time...but a challenge for each of us...**

† **We say we are a living sacrifice but when the rubber meets the road, are we?**

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- **AND WE SEE THE RESULT of this delegation here in verse 7: And the Word of God increased and the number of disciples multiplied (*not added*)!**

† No contention, no division – unity! Unity is found through humility and a servant’s heart!

III. Conclusion

Psa 133:1 A Song of degrees of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!