

## Acts 6:1-7 Body Ministry "We are all in this together!"

**Intro: How many of you like yard work - I am not a big fan of Yard work – I do it because it is necessary but I don't really enjoy it at all.**

**A) One of the things I hate to do the most is to Pull weeds. Overjoyed one day came home – found my nephew – Attacking weeds in backyard.**

**B) Before weed and feed it was tricky what you used on weeds because of the potential to kill everything around it.**

**C) My natural tendency when it came to weeds – was just to ignore it at first – which is always really dumb**

**1) Ignore it long enough and one day – you wake up to find your lawn or garden over run by weeds.**

**D) In fact it amazes me of all thing things in my backyard – the thing that grows the fastest and the heartiest – ARE WEEDS !**

**Whether you are talking about a home, your own heart, marriage, a friendship or even a Church – Weeds left unattended will cause problems**

**A) One of Satan's strategies to weaken the Church or a home is he tries to plant weeds in there.**

**B) If they are not dealt with they will over run everything and bring destruction.**

**C) That is what we see taking place here in Acts 6 – the weed planted is murmur!**

**One of the deadliest kinds.**

**Read V.1-7**

**Set the Scene: We have seen that the Church was growing –Some of them were living communally by necessity.**

**A)Group meal times - That is where this problem arose. There arose a complaint.**

**B)There were in the early church in Jerusalem two kinds of Jews who had become Christians. Grecian or Hellenist and Hebrews – Difference?**

**C)During the days of Alexander the Great, Greek culture, style of dress, and philosophy of life permeated the then-known world.**

1)As a result, many Jews, adopted Grecian ways.

**D)Especially those who had been born and raised in provinces away from Palestine so they had not learned Hebrew, so they spoke Greek.**

1)These were known as Hellenist

**E)The Other Jews, referred to as Hebrews, remained true to the old ways and traditions of Judaism.**

1)Over time The Hebrew Jews looked down on the Grecian Jews as compromising, **"second-class" Jews.**

**Now it seems that at least a perception of that attitude had crept into the early Church.**

**A)The Hellenistic Jews had felt that their Widows were being slighted or neglected in the daily .....**

**B)There arose a Complaint = A Murmur – A secret displeasure not openly avowed.**

**C)Murmur – Usually Starts as a secret – over coffee – *can you believe...***

***You know what really bugs me.... I just don't understand how ....***

**A) That is how it starts – and like a weed – it begins to grow !**

**B) *I was talking to so and so – the other day – they had a good point about***

.....

1) starts to grow – each person that it gets shared with – like water to a weed – it just starts to spread.

**C) Something so simple as an extra piece of bread or a larger helping of mash potatoes was ready to destroy something so sweet and precious that God had begun.**

**Murmuring is always wrong. Always unhealthy.**

**A) Murmuring brought the judgment of God upon the children of Israel in the wilderness, in Old Testament days.**

**B) Murmuring is usually the mark of a cantankerous, discontented, unhappy spirit.**

**1) Indication that there is a problem with the heart**

**Read this week a story that illustrates this point well.**

One hot day a family traveling down the highway between Johnstown and Jamestown stopped at Farmer Jones's place to ask for a drink of water, which he gladly gave them.

he asked them **"•Where are you headed?•"**.

They told him **"•We are moving from Johnstown to Jamestown to live,•"**

**"•Can you tell us what the people there are like?•"**

**Farmer Jones asked "•Well, what kind of people did you find where you lived before?•"**.

To which they replied - **"•Oh, they were the very worst kind!•"**. **"•They were gossipy and unkind and indifferent. We are glad to move away.•"**

**Farmer Jones replied "Well, I am afraid you will find the same in Jamestown."**

The next day another car stopped, and the same conversation took place. These people were moving to Jamestown, too.

they asked "What kind of neighbors will we find there?"

"Well," Farmer Jones, asked "what kind of neighbors did you have where you lived before?"

The couple responded "Oh, they were the very best! **They were so kind and considerate that it almost broke our hearts to have to move away.**"

FJ replied "Well, you will find exactly the same kind again,"

**What is going on in your own heart will play a part in how you see others**

**A) When believers are unhappy and begin to murmur, the first place to look for the problem is in their own hearts.**

**What should you do when you have a legitimate complaint ? Or when you see a definite Problem?**

**A) This might have been a legitimate complaint?**

**B) Know this if You see a problem – Chances are it has been revealed to you because God wants you to be a **part of the Solution.****

**1) Practically – as well as relationally.**

**C) See a problem what Should you do first – **Pray** – ask the Lord – what can I do to make this situation better? **How can I be used to fix.****

**1) See a hole – How can I be used to be a plug?**

**D) See a person struggling – How can I be used to come alongside of them.**

**When you pray – God will speak to your heart !**

**A) Then you can come with a solution to a problem.**

**B) They didn't pray or go to the apostles for counsel – the implication from the text is the murmuring had become so loud –**

**C) It AROSE is the word- NLT There were rumblings of discontentment**

**1) Became so loud the Apostles heard about it! -**

**D) When they heard about it – they dealt with it right away.**

**E) 1<sup>st</sup> Pray and then talk to the RIGHT people!**

**The Priority of the Apostles Acts 6:2-4**

**2 Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit 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."**

**Now, it would be very easy to read that as though the apostles were saying, We are too good or important to wait on tables –**

**A) So Chose 7 guys who are not as important**

**B) That was not the case at all.**

**1) Remember: Jesus had washed their dirty stinky feet – do likewise**

**C) Jesus taught them – Greatest among you must become the servant of all.**

**1) Jesus had modeled for them – Servant leadership.**

**D) They were not, in any sense, downgrading the ministry of serving**

## tables

**Their response was a matter of Priority rather than Preference.**

A) They simply understood –we can't do everything – and we must **give** our priority to Preaching and prayer.

B) It was a matter of Calling rather than an issue of need.

C) Here is what the apostles were saying: **Our calling is not the distribution of food. Our calling is the distribution of the Word.**

D) The disciples determined to focus on praying and preaching. The same Greek word (de/akonia ) is translated "serve" in v 2 & "ministry" in V.4

1) So They were saying, **"We'll serve the Word; you serve the tables."**

Ephesians 4:11-12 says that **"the Lord gave to the Church apostles, teaching pastors, and evangelists to perfect the saints so they could do the work of the ministry."**

**Leaders are to bring people to maturity so they can minister.**

A) The apostles determined not to let any service take precedence over prayer and the ministry of the Word. That was their priority.

B) Remember: At that time the Scriptures, as we have them, were not written. **None of the New Testament** was in writing at this stage of the church.

C) Yet all of the truths which we have reflected in these New Testament pages were being uttered by the apostles as they taught the people from place to place.

1) They were expounding on the truths that Christ had taught them - - things which would become written to make up the NT

D) So it was essential, as they understood it, to devote themselves to this.

1) just think if they had responded to the need rather than their calling – we might not have the NT .

**E)Waiting on tables would have left the apostles little time for anything or anyone else.**

1)They would have dried up under the pressure.

**This is priority for the Church today.**

**A)The Bible teaches that the man that God calls to shepherd the flock must give himself wholly to prayer and preaching.**

**B)Living by those priorities requires total commitment.**

1)The phrase "**give ourselves continually**" stresses the disciples' commitment.

**C)The calling of a Pastor is one of Saturating yourself in the word of God.**

1)One of the first things I ask a guy who says he feels called to Pastoral ministry is tell me about your devotional life.

**D)Tell me where are you reading – studying – what books are you reading right now.**

1)The guy who has that calling will be one who has a strong desire and discipline to get into the word.

**E)Some guys say: That is why I want to be a Pastor is I want to**

The story is told that once after a great Bible teacher had finished teaching, a young man approached him and said, "**I'd give the world to teach the Bible like you do.**" The teacher replied, "**That's exactly what it will cost you.**"

**Others are playing video games / others are watching tv - - given to the word**

## **Paul's instructions to Timothy:**

A) Paul told Timothy his ministry was to 1 Timothy 4:11 "command and teach" In verse 13 he says, "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."

B) That refers to reading the text, explaining the text, and applying the text--a good definition of expository preaching.

C) In verses 14-16 Paul says, "**Neglect not the gift that is in you . . . . Meditate upon these things; give yourself wholly to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine.**"

D) That is the call for someone who feels drawn to be a Pastor today. – Give yourself to the word

E) The Apostles had to stay committed to their Priority

**The best thing that any of us can do is to learn what God is calling us to do and do that whole heartily – Do it well.**

A) A Problem that many people have is they try to do more than what they are called to do – end up not doing anything well.

B) My Problem early days in Oregon- I tried to wear too many hats

C) **Sharp shooters or a shotgun blast.**

D) **My calling – Teach: Church – staff – meet with men – Marriage**

1) Pray –

E) I have never been to Salt and light – never been to camp Pendleton



**1)Not a matter of Preference – it is a matter of Priority.**

**F)Only so many hrs in a week – 20hrs Sunday – 10 for Wednesday**

**1)The other 20-25 hrs is spent in those other areas**

**So the Apostles were giving themselves to their calling and Priority**

**A)They were not going to be the ones to meet this need - - Choose some Proven Men**

## **Proven Men**

**A)Had the apostles done everything – no one else would have grown or had an opportunity to develop their gifts.**

**C)The Apostles want them to be a part of the Solution – Choose 7 men**

D.L. Moody used to say that "it was better to put ten men to work than to try to do the work of ten men."

## **Notice the Criteria of the Proven men**

**#1 They were to be "men of good reputation,"** i.e., they were to have a good witness in the congregation.

**A)They were to be men of good character who could be trusted, men who had already won the confidence of others.**

**1)Already stood out – Guys who were already doing the work**

**C)Never be surprised – that Guy!**

## **#2 They were to be men full of the Holy Spirit.**

**A)In Scripture, to be "full of" means "to be controlled by." These were to be men who were controlled by the Holy Spirit.**

## **B) Who or what are you controlled by?**

1) Some men Controlled **by Debt** – Dictates their choices

C) Some men are controlled **by passions** – their flesh dictates their decisions

D) Some men are controlled by **their wives** –

1) Where vacation – how spend money – where go to church – what activities kids are involved in she calls the shots

E) Ladies – out of place – when you assume that role you are emasculating your husband

**He is called to be the leader and when you strip him of that role – you weaken him.**

A) Men listen a man controlled by the HS is easier to follow.

B) They were to chose men who were spirit led and spirit empowered.

1) Men who were characterized by their Dependence upon God more than anything else.

C) That is one of the Chief Characteristics of a Spiritual man.

**Carnal Christian – Think worldly into the things of the World – that can be a mark.**

A) But the word carnal means fleshly – A carnal Christian is one who counts on something within himself.

B) He says, "I've got what it takes. Just give me a chance, I'll show you what I can do for Christ.

1) He can be one who seeks to serve God in the energy of His flesh – who leans on fleshly wisdom and know how – rather than being spirit directed.

**C) A Carnal man is prone to lean upon – his own experience and know how.**

1) Confidence is primarily in his qualifications and ability.

D) Prone to striving – forcing doors open

**D) These men had to be spiritual men. Full of the Holy Spirit**

### **#3 Full of Wisdom:**

**A) Wisdom is knowledge applied –**

**B) Someone who is full of wisdom is one who knows the word of God and knows how to apply it to practical situations.**

**C) I like this – they had to be men who were Proven – Spirit filled and who had scriptural knowledge.**

**D) But what you say – Weren't they just handing out food. NO!**

1) Ministry is always about People – where there are people there are needs –

**E) The Apostles knew this and so they wanted men who would be able to minister to people.**

1) Men who would have a spiritual sensitivity to see needs

**F) Men who knew the word enough to bring counsel and wisdom to meet those needs with the word.**

**Acts 6:5-6 And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, {Pra/ko/ross} Nicanor, {Na/ku/nor} Timoan, Parme/nas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, 6 whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.**

### **A Pleasing Solution:**

A) There is something wonderful here. All of these names are Greek names.

B) That means they were probably chosen from among the complaining party, the Greek-speaking Jews.

**In other words, they were saying, "Look, you Greek-speaking Jews. You are not as many as we Hebrew-speakers, and you may not trust us, but we trust you."**

A) Church problems give us an opportunity to exercise our faith, not only faith in the Lord, but also faith in each other.

## **Three Powerful Results Acts 6:7**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Then the word of God spread,**

A) What does it mean when it says "the word of God spread or increased"?

B) This phrase is used several times in Scripture and every time it means that the word of God abounded more, i.e., it was more widely proclaimed.

C) Obviously the apostles now had more time to speak, to utter the words of God,

1) Second, as a direct result of that,

### **2<sup>nd</sup> and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem,**

**A) That is always the effect of the abounding of the word of God. All we need to do is get the truth out to people.**

B) The Bible is the truth, it is the way things really are. We are living in a world ruled by illusion and fantasy where people are confused, disturbed, and upset.

1)They feel that there is nothing certain, nothing to be trusted.

C)Everything is in cloud of uncertainty and illusion. They do not know where to turn or what to believe.

1)The truth of God's word hits with wonderful impact upon such minds.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Surprise and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.**

A)Think about this Any priest walking into the temple on the first Good Friday, seeing the veil rent from **top to bottom**, would have known something miraculous had taken place.

**B)It had to be done by the hand of God –Veil was 60 feet wide/ 35 ft high and 10 inches thick**

1)Massive – took over 100 Priest to hang it

**C)God opened the door – Holy of Holy**

1)Sacrifices and rituals made sense in Christ