



Sermon Text: Acts 6:1-7

Sermon Date: October 29, 2017

Our sermon text presented an unedited look at life in the Jerusalem church. A complaint arises and the unity of the church is tested. We looked at our text by examining the problem, investigating the solution, and seeing the result.

THE PROBLEM (1)

While at this time the church consisted only of Jewish Christians, it was still a multicultural church. There were the Greek-speaking “Hellenists” minority and the Aramaic-speaking “Hebrew” majority. Historically the Hellenists were scorned as second-class Israelites. As the church grew and the church worked to provide for the needs of its widows, some of the Hellenists widows were not being adequately cared for and the breakdown did not go unnoticed. Undoubtedly the situation was viewed through the lens of historical prejudice. As a result, the unity of the church is breaking.

THE SOLUTION (2-6)

Pastor Justin highlighted five principles from the Apostles’ solution to the problem.

1. **Humility to listen:** The Apostles’ listened even though the Hellenists were not simply stating a concerned observation but leveling an accusation. Yet, when the complaint came, they listened.
2. **Urgency to act:** After examining the legitimacy of the complaint, they act upon it. They didn’t dismiss the concern or deflect the criticism. They crafted a plan and called the church to action.
3. **Wisdom to prioritize:** While this was an important need, the Apostles wisely refused to be distracted from the essential ministry of the Word and prayer. They did not allow the urgent to push aside their essential ministry in the church.
4. **Willingness to delegate:** They put this important ministry into the hands of others who could do it effectively. Kent Hughes says, “Delegation is at the heart of developing followers.” Since they couldn’t do it all by themselves, the Apostles gladly invited others into leadership.
5. **Eagerness to empower:** The Apostles empowered the men the church selected. As a result, two of these men—Stephen and Phillip—are integral in taking the gospel outside of Jerusalem.

THE RESULT (7)

The result of the Apostles’ solution is that the gospel continues to spread and the church continues to grow.

TAKEAWAYS

1. **Satan’s various attacks.** In this section of Acts, we see the various ways Satan attacks the church: outside persecution, internal corruption, and now distraction and division. We must remember that our Enemy is clever and relentless in his tactics to destroy the church.
2. **The church adapts.** As the church grew and situations changed, the Apostles established new structures as needed. We too must adapt to changing dynamics in order to do effective ministry.
3. **The church stays together.** It would have been easy for the church to separate into Hebrews and Hellenists, and yet they stayed together. As the well-worn creases of our society are exposed again, we must strive to stay together—holding tightly to the unity of the church.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you from the sermon and the biblical text from this Sunday?
2. Since grumbling and complaining are serious sins (Phil. 2:14-15), how should church members express concerned observations to those in leadership?
3. What makes unity in the midst of diversity so difficult? Is it worth it? How can we pass the tests of unity that we will face as a diverse church?