

DAILY MINISTRATION ACTS 6

Intro. The early church is experiencing tremendous growth. The apostles are teaching and preaching Jesus Christ in the temple and in every house. The disciples are multiplying, but a problem has arisen. The Grecian widows are being neglected. It is a wonderful lesson for us to consider as we examine the 6th chapter of the book of Acts.

I. Seven Men chosen (6:1-7).

A. Murmuring.

1. Spirit of unity was being threatened with the murmurs of dissatisfied disciples.
2. The Grecian Jews were Israelites who lived outside Palestine, who had acquired Greek culture, and who spoke the Greek language.
3. The “Hebrews” were the Jews who lived in the homeland, spoke the language, and followed the customs of their fathers.
4. Former were called “hellenists.”
5. The “complaint” sounds as if some partiality was being shown in the distribution of the common funds.
6. Probably was an accidental oversight that led to such complaining, yet such murmuring or whisperings of discontent is a sin.
 - a. Phil. 2:14
 - b. I Peter 4:9—grudging
7. It would certainly be difficult to care for everyone unless some brethren were especially charged with that responsibility to supply the needs of every deserving person.
8. It would seem that the apostles were trying to take care of the needy.

B. The meeting (v.2ff)

1. The apostles, who were guided by the Holy Spirit, were not willing for that unity to be replaced by dissension.
2. They had a solution to propose.
3. First of all, “It is not reason...” i.e. Not satisfactory, it is not right, it is not reasonable, that we neglect the word of God.
 - a. They had been chosen to proclaim what they had seen and heard.
 - b. There were no substitutes for this eye witness testimony.
 - c. Nothing must interfere with their proclamation. Opposite of social gospel..
 - d. A need had arisen and a plan to meet it had to be formulated, and that appears to be the Lord’s method of introducing new arrangements into the work of the church.
4. Solution.
 - a. Choose seven men from **among you** with certain qualifications to serve in this capacity.
 - (1) Honest report—men of integrity
 - (2) Full of the Holy Ghost----full of fruit of Spirit as respects a holy life.
 - (3) Wisdom—prudence, or skill, to be able to make wise and equitable decisions.
 - b. It pleased the whole multitude.
 - c. Seven men were chosen.
 - d. The process was... the apostles suggested the course of action and stated the qualifications... the people selected the men, and then the apostles prayed and laid hands on those whom the people had chosen.

C. Deacons.

1. It is true that the seven men who were selected to serve tables were not called “deacons.”
2. Since they were appointed to *serve tables* i.e. *minister to tables*, as the marginal note has it, and inasmuch as the word “serve” (*diakoneo*) is the verb form of the noun *diakonia* (deacon),

it appears that the seven men were deacons.

3. The expression “serve...as deacons” (I Tim. 3:13) is a translation of *diakoneo*.
 4. These men were to do the work of deacons.
 5. The early disciples were not called “Christians” until several years after the church was established (Acts 11:26), but that does not mean that they were no Christians during the time between Pentecost and Antioch.
 6. Why had no deacons been appointed before this?
 - a. Church is only 3-4 years old.
 - b. Up to this point, there was no need for such.
 - c. It should not be thought strange that we perhaps have no mention of the original appointment of deacons, for we have no records of the first appointment of elder either.
 - d. Yet in Acts 11:30, we find elders in the Jerusalem church.
 - e. We conclude that the deacons were chosen when the need arose. (Qualifications - I Tim.3)
 - f. The apostles would have served as “elders” (overseers) until they left Jerusalem, and then elders would have been chosen, for a need had also arisen.
- II. Growth of the Early Church (6:7).
- A. Word of God increased.
 1. More and more people heard the message.
 2. The seed being sown...
 3. Doing the work God intended for them to do. (II Tim. 4:2,5).
 4. The effect of the word in the lives of the people who heard it.
 - B. Disciples multiplied greatly.
 - C. Priests were **obedient** to the faith. (Christianity).
- III. Stephen arrested and falsely accused. (6:8-15).
- A. Was performing great wonders and signs.
 1. Exercise of spiritual gifts he had received from laying on of apostles hands.
 2. First instance of miracles having been performed by anyone other than an apostle in the early church.
 3. Great wonders and miracles.
 - a. Enormous scope and magnitude.
 - b. Indicates done to awe and teach.
 4. Disputing – discussing the questions in open debate.
 - a. Means to examine together, to discuss, dispute, question.
 - b. Stephen would discuss their need for conversion.
 5. They were not able to resist. (v.10).
 6. They had no strength to withstand.
 7. They were not able to answer his arguments.
 8. Jude 3
 9. Unable to meet him for two reasons:
 - a. The truth he presented.
 - b. The wisdom and the spirit by which he spake it.
 10. Great courage and conviction.
 - B. False accusers.
 1. They bribed men to be false witnesses.
 2. When men do not intend to receive the truth and find that they cannot overthrow it in fair and open discussion, they resort to misrepresentation and violence, or to both, as they did here.
 3. The Sadducees endeavored to put down the preaching of the apostles by authority-by simply commanding them by the authority of the Jewish high court not to preach or teach.
 4. The Pharisees sought to convict Stephen of blasphemy.
 5. According to the law of Moses, real blasphemy was punishable with death (Lev. 24:16).

6. John 19:7
 7. His speech recorded in chapter 7 shows that he was not guilty.
 8. They could hear what they wanted to hear and come to that conclusion.
- C. They were able to stir up the people.
1. Public opinion was aroused against him.
 2. More successful way of accomplishing their purpose
 3. False witnesses state their case.
- D. Fixed their gaze on him
1. What do you have to say for yourself?
 2. Suggested that Stephen's face took on a glow, a radiance similar to what Moses' face had after he had been in the presence of God.

Con: When problems arise, and they will, how are we going to deal with them? When problems arose in the early church, the apostles dealt with them promptly. Division was avoided. One of the men who was chosen to take care of the problem proved to be a great evangelist in the kingdom. Stephen had great courage and conviction as he preached God's word. We need that same conviction and courage today.