

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 15TH, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

THE NEED FOR SERVANTS (ACTS 6:1-2) "IN THOSE DAYS..."

As the early Church started, it was comprised of people in and around Jerusalem who were strictly observing Jewish customs (Acts 2:5). Then the gospel's reach expanded to those outside of Jerusalem (Acts 5:16).

- These new disciples from outside Jerusalem were Jewish Christians, but due to the Diaspora, they did not strictly observe Jewish customs.

"THERE AROSE A COMPLAINT"

The Hellenists (Jews who embraced Greek culture) believed that their widows were being neglected compared to the widows of the Hebrews (who strictly held to Jewish culture).

- Prejudice was growing—the Hellenists were viewed as unspiritual, second-class followers compromised by culture, while the Hebrews were seen as holier-than-thou traditionalists.

ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO SLOW THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

The verbiage communicates that the widows "being overlooked in the daily distribution" was not intentional or premediated; it was simply due to an oversight or lack of organization.

- Satan had attacked the Church on many fronts. He used opposition and persecution, tried to corrupt from within, and would now attempt to use an honest oversight to divide the Church.

DISPLAYING WISDOM

Everyone assembled, and the 12 told them that "it would not be right for [them] to give up preaching the word of God to wait on tables."

- This is not a superior attitude of the 12. They were not saying that serving the widows was beneath them but that they should remain faithful to their calling.

FAITHFUL TO THE CALL OF MINISTRY

In the text describing "daily distribution" and "wait on tables," a Greek word (*diakonia*) is used that can be translated as "ministry" or "service."

- Essentially, ministry is not only preaching the Word, but it also consists of serving and taking care of widows. God calls different people to different kinds of ministry, so to be effective, we must be faithful to the individual calls.

ANSWERING THE CALL (ACTS 6:3-7)

"THE TWELVE SUMMONED THE WHOLE COMPANY"

Some commentators view these passages as evidence of strong congregational involvement in church decisions. However, we read that leadership saw a need, gave direction, then led the congregation through implementing the solution.

- When we're reading the Word, we must be careful not to look at it through the lens of our own backgrounds and biases.

"SELECT FROM AMONG YOU"

The apostles told the group of Believers to "select from among you seven men...we can appoint to this duty."

- All the men chosen had Greek names, so there is a strong possibility they were Hellenists themselves. Whether this was intentional or not, it does show sensitivity towards the offended Hellenists from the group.

"SO THEY CHOSE..."

The seven men were not chosen simply for being Hellenists, as that was not in the qualifications laid out by the 12. The men chosen were to be "of good reputation" and "full of the Spirit and wisdom."

- The men were chosen because their good character was obvious to those around them.

SERVERS NOT OFFICERS

Paul will address the offices of "overseers" and "deacons" in 1 Timothy 3, but that does not seem to be the point in this passage.

- These passages are communicating the need to delegate more than discussing the creation of an office. Delegating frees both parties up to serve and honor God with the gifts and talents that He has given them.

NO SMALL FEAT

Verse 5 says, "This proposal pleased the whole company." The fact that everyone was united in agreement with the apostles' proposal shows how the Spirit was at work in them and the whole company.

- The apostles were in agreement with a solution, and the disciples agreed with how the Lord was leading the apostles.

"THEY HAD THEM STAND BEFORE THE APOSTLES"

The apostles prayed and laid their hands on the men before releasing them into ministry. Luke will communicate many ways the laying of hands is used in Acts, including healing (9:17), the giving of the Spirit (8:18), and as seen here, commissioning to a task (13:3).

- Even practical services done to the glory of God are spiritual services.

"SO THE WORD OF GOD SPREAD"

Satan's attempt to cause division with this dispute could have ended poorly, but because it was handled with wisdom and sensitivity, the gospel continued to spread.

- The Church "increased greatly in number," including "a large group" of the 8,000 priests and 10,000 Levites who would have been in temple service at this time.

FULL OF GRACE AND POWER (ACTS 6:8-15)

"NOW STEPHEN..."

God performed great wonders and signs through the apostles, and here we see God working through others, like Stephen, who are "full of grace" (or "full of faith," NKJV) and "power."

- The textual difference in translations should not cause concern or dispute because the meaning of both is the same: to live in faith is to walk in God's grace.

GREATER IS HE THAT IS IN ME (1 JOHN 4:4)

The text does not say that Stephen was smarter, more educated, or better at debating than the Jews from Freedmen's Synagogue.

- The wisdom that came from the Spirit of God in Stephen was greater than the wisdom of his opponents (1 John 4:4), and "they were unable to stand up against his wisdom and the Spirit by whom he was speaking."

"MEMBERS OF THE FREEDMEN'S SYNAGOGUE"

When the text says that the crowd arguing with Stephen in the Synagogue was composed of "some from Cilicia," it is possible that a man named Saul may have been there since he was from Tarsus in Cilicia.

- Before his conversion in Chapter 9, Saul (Paul) will be seen holding the coats of the men who stoned Stephen to death (7:58).

SHIFTING POPULAR OPINION

The opponents of Stephen knew they could not win a fair fight, so they used lies and deception to shift popular opinion against him.

- We see how fickle humans are and how quickly popular opinion can change. The crowds that welcomed Jesus were quickly calling for him to be crucified; the crowds that loved the apostles would be "stirred up" against Stephen (v. 12).

"LIKE THE FACE OF AN ANGEL"

The content of what Stephen said is not recorded. We know only that he was accused of blasphemy against Moses and God in a similar way to the false accusation against Jesus (Mt. 26:59-61).

- Stephen stood in front of his accusers, making eye contact—not in defiance. He had no anger or fear but only confidence, security, peace, and courage flowing from the Holy Spirit in him.

WE ARE TO CELEBRATE DIFFERENCES

- The Church is comprised of individuals with different backgrounds, experiences, giftings, and talents who work together in ministry for the good of all.
- When we are not full of the Holy Spirit and co-laboring with Christ, we give the enemy a foothold to use our differences to cause division.

SUBMITTING TO THE CALL

- We all have a general calling to make disciples who make disciples.
- There is a specific call to ministry that we must submit to as members of the body.
- What is God calling you to that only you can do?
- We are not to covet or compare callings but to faithfully submit to the calling we receive.

NOT BEING DISTRACTED

- Satan's attempts to divide the Church were unsuccessful, and the apostles remained focused on the ministry God had for them.
- Is the enemy distracting us from our focus on the Word of God and prayer?
- Is the enemy distracting us from submitting to various kinds of ministry? Do we only seek positions that others see and applaud?