

August 21st, 2016
Pinecrest Baptist Church
a.m.

Sermon Series: Acts Men
Sermon #13 Title: What To Expect From the Church (Part 2)
Sermon #13 Text: (Acts 6:1-7)

Last week when we started this passage of scripture, and this subject we covered two primary things that we can expect when we come to church . . .

The Practice of the Church – To Make Disciples
Power From the Church – To Become Disciples

This morning, the rubber meets the road, by learning there are three more things that we can expect in the church that Jesus built.

The Problems that Come In a Church

Verse 1 – “And in those days, when the number of the disciples were multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.”

*Note – Now the very first thing to take note of is this – It is not a sin to have problems. It is not a problem to have problems. It is a sin to let problems become a problem.

(As we walk through this, friend I hope that you will understand at least one thing that the scriptures teach us is that Problems do not have to become a Problem

- Furthermore, you ought to understand that there will be no church that does not have problems to deal with -)

- Let me ask you this question:

What are churches made of? People!
Where there are People, there are Problems,
and anytime anyone gets the idea that I'll go,
or be there, until problems arise, you have
already planned your exit before you ever
enter.

This first church does not just demonstrate that for us, there are a few things we can delineate from it.

- As we look at this text, take note of three things that we can clearly see about the problems that arise in the church.

1) Unintended Neglect

a.) “their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.”

(1) The number of disciples and church members had grown in number to the point that the Apostles and their immediate helpers could logistically, not keep up with everyone's needs.

- I've been around long enough, and I have seen enough to know that a good church will experience this ten times before they experience any other problems.

- Unmet needs, unintended neglect, and overlooked suffering have been problems in the Lord's churches from the very beginning!

- Why is That?

(2.) Natural Limitations – “the number of disciples was multiplied.”

Up till this point – 12 apostles, and most likely the women that were with them from the beginning, were doing everything

that was needed to be done . . . 10 apostles, when Peter and John weren't busy being arrested . . .

- They were teaching people
- They were preaching Jesus
- They were collecting the offerings and goods that people brought for the care of church members . . .
- They were inventorying it, storing it
- They were distributing it

Then something happened . . . they had more irons than they had fire . . .

They had 12 sets of eyes, hands, and feet, trying to care for thousands of people.

- (Know this . . . Every minister, and every ministry has natural limitations . . . they are physically, and practically unable to know everything, about everyone, all of the time. – And I know this . . . a man will become useless, trying to be useful to everyone, about everything, all of the time.)

- Now I know this also . . .

Most everyone knows this, and even in those days, reasonable men, knew that and understood that.

Matthew 25:15 – Listen to what Jesus said in the parable of the talents about His servants . . .

“And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.”

- Men by their creation are limited and those limitations will always be smaller than the needs around them.

(Now that being said, this problem was a Problem!

- Needs were being unmet, by the people portending to meet them.

- Attention was not being given to people that needed attention.

- Now these were not problems that could go ignored. The answer was not to just say, “be warmed and filled” and all will be well.

- The issue was in fact an issue, but it was not a conspiracy!

- There is more to this problem than the problem – there was an “unnecessary suspicion”

2) Unnecessary Suspicion

- “there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews.”

- The “Grecians” were most likely the “Hellenistic – Jews” or what we might call “secular Jews” – they were Jew by race, but not fully sold out to the Religion. – They had come to Christ “from the outside”.

The Hebrews were the more “orthodox” Jews, who had come to Christ “from the inside”

- It was the Hellenistic Jews whose widows were doing without, and the first reaction to the problem was that it was somehow – “on purpose.”

- In the traditions of the Orthodox Jews, their normal practice was to receive offerings, meals, and gifts, to be given to the widows in their synagogues.

- Some scholars tell us that this was a weekly practice – So when the church became so large, and converts began growing, they already had an experience of how to take care of their people . . . this is why in Chapter 5 . . . the people

brought their things to lay at the feet of the apostles for disbursements.

Now the problem is that the need has outgrown the logistics, and someone is getting left out and overlooked, and the people who came in from the “outside” are suspicious that the people who came in from the “inside” are taking care of themselves first, and leaving out the rest.

- It is a suspicion that there is an agenda
- It is a suspicion that they are still viewed as “outsiders.”
- It is a suspicion that this new “fellowship” and “friendship” and “family” is only really for the “insiders.”

1 – It is an unnecessary suspicion that indicted the rest of the people charging them with being . . .

- Loveless – (maybe they don’t really care about our people.)
- Truthless – (maybe they aren’t as genuine as we thought they were.)

- At the bottom of it, was an innate belief that every problem, every neglect, every silence, every missing thing . . . is someone’s fault!

- Here is one thing that every person needs to know – Legitimate Oversites are not necessarily Loveless Neglect!

Proverbs 18:13 – “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.”

Job 29:16 – Job in the midst of his grief said, “the cause which I knew not, I searched out.”

- These new and immature Christians had responded to their unmet needs with unnecessary suspicion.

3) Unrighteous Reaction

- “there arose a murmuring”

- A noble people did an un-noble thing!

It cannot be overlooked that it was not the “widows” doing the murmuring, it was the people who loved and cared for those widows.

(We know not what the widows response to their unmet needs were, but it appears that they were suffering silently – and the people around them, and loved them – saw their neglect.)

- There is a sense of nobility on both parts – the widows who seemed to patiently suffer, and the people who watched for their needs –

- But with all of their nobility they did a very un-noble, and unholy, and unrighteous thing – “they murmured”

- “gongoosmos” - to grumble

(the idea is under your breath)

- there was “unsaid rumblings” among the people.

(Now preacher, that just happens . . .in that day and in this day . . . Come up close and listen . . . it is SIN . . .

- Murmuring is Forbidden by God, Encouraged by Satan, and Judged like Rebellion.

1st Corinthians 10:10-11 – “Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

Philippians 2:14 – “Do all things without murmurings and disputings.”

Jude 1:15-16 – “To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.”)

From a circumstantial standpoint the church had a real problem – people were being overlooked, and their needs under-met.

From an eternal stand point that wasn't the real problem . . . the real problem was how they were handling their real problem, which was to handle it in a sinful way.

- Now we said all of that to say this . . . There you have the first church, enduring some of the enduring issues in every church, and dealing them in a very human, but unholy way.

The Providence Given To a Church

Though every true church has true problems, every true church has true Providence – if there is no providence, there is no church, but where there is providence, God has given a church what it needs to handle the problems.

1st Corinthians 12:18 – “But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.”

1.) Diligent Workman

a.) The apostles

b.) The Grecian people taking watch care over their own widows . . .

c.) Men of honest report, full the Holy Spirit, and full of wisdom . . .

- The Lord has never left one of His churches bankrupt of diligent workman.

2.) Discerning Wisdom

Vs 3 – “Wherefore brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.”

God has a wise solution to every worldly problem. – These men took a page from the notebook of Exodus. – When Moses was trying to act as judge for the people of Israel, Jethro stated the obvious - “you can't do this” appoint others!

Now whether they looked to Moses or not, I know not, but this I know . . . they did what he did.

(note what the leaders didn't do . . .

1 – They didn't bite back

2 – They didn't blow it off

3 – They recognized the reality, and with wisdom made effort to correct it.)

- I believe that in every church that is the Lord's church, He will always put diligent workman, who either possess or are growing to possess discerning wisdom.

3.) Decided Willingness – “the saying pleased the whole multitude.” – vs 5

Do you know that that means – that means that the “hurt” in the Grecians, was an “honest” hurt and not an agenda of bitterness. Now some people aren’t happy, unless they aren’t happy! There are those people who are fooled by the flesh, and fueled by the flesh to make sure problems stay a problem!

- The real problems that exist in any church, are not those who have problems, but those who want them! – The Bible has a special kind of word for them, they are called a “heretic.” Titus 3:10-11 – “A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.”

- This is the person who is “schismatic,” they are divisive, and are settled on being unsettled. It is someone who has the spirit of permanent disgruntlement . . .

(Now preacher – isn’t the church for them too – Nope!

Paul told Titus to “reject them”

Proverbs 6:19 – The seventh thing that the Lord hates is “he that soweth discord among the brethren.”

Now that’s people.

But here is Providence – “The whole multitude was pleased”

- The Spirit of the Lord would prevail among honest people!

The Priorities Established In a church

1.) We Never Trade the Bible For Bodies – “It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God to serve tables.” – vs 2

a.) The Bible from the beginning of the church has laid down this premise for ever –

Regardless of what else we need, we will always need the Bible first!

b.) We never leave this . . . to meet that! – We never stop this . . . to do that!

(we live by the Word of the Lord)

2.) We Let Servants Serve Who God Shows to Serve

a.) - vs 3 read

- don’t look for men to serve – look for the men who DO serve – that’s who you want!

- A servant doesn’t have to find service, service often finds him!

The instructions were not to take volunteers – but to appoint, and instruct these kinds of men to do what we will appoint them to do.

Conclusion: - The problems never halted the progress . . .

When the preachers did the preaching – the listeners did the listening – the servants did the serving – and all the people did as they were commanded to do . . .

- vs 7 – “And the Word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of priests were obedient to the faith.”