

11-29-20 People Equal Problems

Acts 6:1-7

How many have people problems? Or problems with people?

Would it be safe to say that most problems are caused by people?

But most individual problems, states, country, and world problems is caused by people. (You and I)

We are exhausting, needy, whiny, stubborn, selfish, temper tantrum, spoiled, take my ball home, don't ever talk to me again, call you out on Social Media, violent, angry, and willfully ignorant. Or is that just me?!

The biggest problem in any relationship is US!

I love it when someone says, I can't wait to get out of here, move so and so, life will be so much better. Are you taking you with you? Because if you are, you are most definitely mistaken.

Although people (we) are the problem, we are not hopeless. God didn't feel that way and He is best suited to judge that. Apart from God, there isn't much hope. The best self-help guru's having nothing on the life transforming power of God.

God can take a selfish big mouth and change them into a selfless big mouth for Him and His kingdom. God can take a habitual liar and make them a preacher of His Word, the truth. God can take a thief and transform them into a sacrificial giver. God can take a murderer and transform them into someone that gives life.

For this to happen, we, the problem ones, must be pliable, teachable, humble enough to look in the mirror (Introspective) and be honest with themselves. God can and will humble people, but how they respond, where they turn in that humbling moment determines the results of it.

It is the same when it comes to hearing the truth of the gospel, some will hear the message and ponder on it, then dismiss it, some will dismiss it all together, and some will hear it, place their faith in it and forever be changed.

In **Acts 6:1-7**, we will see that People Equal Problems. So far, the church has been leading thousands to Jesus, baptizing, discipling, gathering, and God is blessing.

Let us read **verse 1a**, "**Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying...**"

The church is multiplying, and it is experiencing incredible rapid growth. It is estimated that the church at this time is at least 20,000 members. This is incredible and it is huge church. And God is working supernaturally among them.

The fact is, God wants his church to grow. Whether you have a small church or a large church, God wants that church to grow. Jesus said, "Upon this rock, I will build my church." God wants his church to reach those around us with the gospel.

God's church is on fire! Keep reading...**Acts 6:1-7**

I must be honest, up until **Acts 6**, I have felt bad. The early church was a superpower church, and God was pleased, working miracles and healings. Then I read these verses and it encouraged me. I found

myself in verse 1, **“there arose a complaint”** better translated as, grumbling or mummering. The Greek word is gongysmos, gong-gue-smoss.

I. **People Were Grumbling (v.1)**

- Gong-gue-smoss, complaining, grumbling, mummering is foreign to all of us, right? I see those smiles, many of us are masters at gong-gue-smoss. I know I am!
- People equal problems. I have said, life is all about conflict resolution. On this side of heaven there is always going to be conflict when people are involved. We must spend our lives mastering conflict resolution.
- Factors that led to conflict in the early church: Rapid change, grumbling, discrimination, blind spots, and unmet needs. If it could happen in the church with the best pastoral staff, it can happen any church.
- Notice why the grumbling was happening. They felt there were some inconsistencies in the ministry focus towards, widows; they felt some of their needs were going unmet.
- Bottom line – unmet expectations. And that is typically the root cause of most relationship issues – unmet expectations.
- Now remember, this is a multi-ethnic church. It started on Pentecost when multiple nationalities had come to Jerusalem for that festival. They heard the good news about Jesus' death, burial and resurrection and they were converted.
- Now here's the deal: because the truth about God's salvation was so powerful and life-changing, they stayed in Jerusalem instead of going back to their homes. So, a multi-ethnic congregation exists. One of the ethnicities was the Hellenists. And they felt their group's widows were being neglected. So, part of this murmuring includes a hint of racism or discrimination. That's not just a 20th century phenomenon.
- Now let me ask you a question: do you think that the Apostles were racist and discriminating against these Greek widows? Of course not. Was it intentional that the apostles were not taking care of these women? No. But that is often how it is in churches.
- People's needs get neglected, but it's not intentional.
- But when we get hurt or neglected, we start thinking bad things about the other person. We start questioning their motives. And wondering about why they did what they did – or didn't do what we felt they should do. That's what was happening here. They thought, my goodness, the apostles are discriminating against the Greek, Hellenistic widows. So how did they seek to correct the problem?
- I am afraid if this were today, the church would be burned to the ground and the leadership of the church would be stung up and hung over a vat of acid by their toes. The members would be advised to start an apology tour. (another example of critical theory, take down the oppressor)

Galatians 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

How did the Apostles respond?

II. Got the People Involved in the Problem. (verses 2-4)

- **Read verses 2-4**
- They delegated duties to the people.
- Now this is an important principle, often when we encounter a problem in our life, there are different ways we try to deal with them; and ultimately, we discover those ways are inadequate.
- Some of us will just ignore it. We think, oh it will go away. Like when a light comes on in our vehicle? I'm just going to ignore it. We get happy if it goes away, to only have it pop back up. One car I had, I called, it my hooptie. That car was nasty! Kim wouldn't drive or ride in it. When a light would come on, I would put black tape over it so I wouldn't see it. Most of the time ignoring a problem doesn't solve it, it makes it worse.
- Some of us, when problems come into our life will point the finger and say, it is your fault. This isn't my problem, it is you - it's the blame game. Detroit Lions fans are great with this one.
- Others will try to handle it all on their own. They will strive and try to fix it and get all stressed out trying to handle on their own. God knows and He is all I need!
- Well the apostles did not respond in any of those three ways. The apostles decided that they were going to delegate. Delegate. Now that is a great word isn't it. Delegation.
- Here are the apostles and they recognize – our primary responsibility as the under-shepherds of the church is to Preach and to Pray. We have got to delegate this.
- We see here two offices form, elders, and deacons. Now there's a word I want you to note in **verse 3**. The very last word of that verse, what is it? Business, Duty. That word literally means a task. They were looking for others to get involved and help handle the tasks in the church.
- Could we use some more of that here at Bethel? More delegation? More people involved in helping getting tasks done and helping in ministries?
- Uh oh, now I am meddling. Well, while I am meddling, let me ask? If you are a born-again follower of Christ, what are you doing for His local church? How are you helping resolve conflicts? How are you helping with unmet needs? How are you getting involved to lighten the load of other brothers and sisters?
- Allow for the uncomfortable silence.

III. Problem People Chose a Godly Solution (verses 3, 5-6)

- The apostles lay out the prerequisites that they require for the servants to be chosen in verse 3.
- **"Brethren, brothers"** must be born again, part of the family of God. **"Good reputation"** can be trusted. **"Full of the Holy Spirit"** they needed to be obedient and faithful to God. **"Wisdom"** they were to be full of wisdom.

- Those are the expectations of God’s servants. They are pretty high. And we have put them to the test. These men were nominated by members of the early church, the people who know them well.
- **Read verses 5-6**
- Well, what was the result of this administrative, delegating decision by the apostles as they led the first church? That leads to the fourth and final point this morning.

IV. Godly Solutions Lead to Godly Results (v.7)

- **Read verse 7, “Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.”**
- The word of God spread, disciples increased greatly (magas) and priests were saved.
- What has happened? The church had a problem. The church dealt with the problem and God said, now that you have dealt with the problem in the right way, I am going to bless you supernaturally. You thought I was growing the church before; I am really going to grow the church now.
- Why? Because the church was healthier - and healthy things grow.
- How did it grow? The word of God continued to increase. What is the word of God? It's the word of testimony about Jesus. The Gospel.
- Servants were empowered, word of God was elevated, and discipleship increased.
- People problems handled godly, result in God’s blessings.

Conclusion

Servants were willing to pay any price to serve Christ, and this inspired the people to live their faith daily.

Are you part of the problem? Yes, we all are.

Are you part of the solution? We all should.

Where have you placed your trust? In yourself? People equal problems, most of the times, I (this person) create many of my problems. I am glad that I have a relationship with God, and He walks with me through them.

God is willing to do the same with anyone who is willing to allow Him.

2 Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

Acts 2:38, "Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the [k]remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 3:19, "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

Romans 3:10, "As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;"

Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"

Romans 5:8, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 10:9, "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."

Romans 10:13, "For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."