

Sermon Discussion 10/18/2015

Acts 6:1-7 – “Servant-Leadership for Ministry and Mission” by Drew Hunter

Sunday’s Outline

The image of a vine growing on a trellis is helpful in describing the life of a local church. A vibrant vine is lush and continually growing, making the trellis underneath hardly noticeable. At some point, the trellis will have to be addressed to bear the weight of the lush vine, or else it will collapse. For a vine that is young and small, a beautiful trellis won’t serve its purpose. The need for a stronger, bigger trellis became necessary for the early church in Acts 6. As the church grew, Luke shows his audience:

- 1) Rapid growth (6:1a) – God grew the church from 120 to several thousand very quickly
- 2) Challenged growth (6:1b-2) – there are serious administrative, cultural, and missional problems
- 3) Supported growth (6:3-6) – the apostles shepherd the flock by creating the role of deacon
- 4) Continued growth (6:7) – As the ministry of the word increased, the church continued to grow

Freed up from the daily administrative tasks that had become too large to handle themselves, the apostles are able to devote themselves to pray and teaching of the Word. The people being cared for under the leadership elders receive their servant-leadership and follow their lead. With mutual respect for and sound structure between the sheep and shepherds, the church is again organizationally able to steward this fast growth.

Quotations

Speaking about Satan’s tactics, John Stott wrote, “His strategy was carefully developed. He attacked on three fronts. His first and crudest tactic was physical violence; he tried to crush the church by persecution. His second and more cunning assault was moral corruption...his third and subtlest ploy was distraction. He sought to deflect the apostles from their priority responsibility of prayer and preaching by preoccupying them with social administration, which was not their calling...These then were his weapons – physical (persecution), moral (subversion), and professional (distraction).”

Help for Understanding & Application

- 1) Using the image of the vine and the trellis, what are the two possible errors a church can make with regard to what it is focused on?
- 2) The church has grown from 12 to 120 to several thousand people very quickly. Why is this happening? See Acts 2:40-41 and 2:47.
- 3) What was now challenging the growth of the church in Acts 6? Why was this a challenge on multiple (administrative, cultural, and missional) levels?
- 4) How do the apostles “build a trellis” in response to this problem? Summarize the process the apostles took to addressing the problem using these 5 words: perception, initiation, communication, reception, and execution.
- 5) What are the areas of ministry for elders? For deacons?
- 6) How did the leaders of the early church serve the body through this decision and plan of action? How did the people respond to their leadership?
- 7) What is the role of a servant’s heart in leadership?