

EMPOWERED

PRIORITY ONE

Acts 6:1 – 7 (ESV)

February 11, 2024

Jon Field, Lead Pastor

MESSAGE NOTES

PRIORITIES TO THRIVE AND PRIORITY ONE:

Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. – Acts 6:1 – 7 (ESV)

- **Priority: Growing in Christ as we work through conflict**

Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. – Acts 6:1 (ESV)

- **Two mistakes in bringing complaints:**

- **Complaining to the wrong people**

"Most crises are not true crises. Give it a week or so, and your perspective will change."

– Thom Rainer

- **Attributing motive**

For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

– James 2:13 (ESV)

EMPOWERED

– Two ways to constructively bring complaints:

- **Come one-on-one at the right time to the right people, instead of forming a committee first**

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses." – Matthew 18:15 – 16 (ESV)

- **Come gently instead of aggressively**

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. – Ephesians 4:29 (NASB)

Let your gentleness be evident to all ... – Philippians 4:5 (NIV)

- **Priority: Living out the importance and joy of meeting needs**

... because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. – Acts 6:1 (ESV)

And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables." – Acts 6:2 (ESV)

"Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty." – Acts 6:3 (ESV)

"But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." – Acts 6:4 (ESV)

PRIORITY ONE: Experiencing the blessing of pursuing Christ first

And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. – Acts 6:5 – 6 (ESV)

ENCOUNTER GOD, ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER and ENGAGE THE WORLD

And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. – Acts 6:7 (ESV)

EMPOWERED

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Discussion Starter: Discuss why conflict is a normal part of life in any business team, circle of friends or family.
- What was one of your biggest take aways for you from this passage and why?
- What are some common mistakes we make when dealing with conflict in less healthy ways?
- Christian leader Thom Rainer once said, *“Most crises are not true crises. Give it a week or so, and your perspective will change.”* Where is the wisdom in this statement?
- Read Matthew 18:15 – 16. What are some of the principles God gives us in these verses for dealing with conflict?
- Why is it so important to talk in person and face-to-face instead of forming a “committee” first when dealing with an area of disagreement with someone?
- Read Ephesians 4:29 – 32. What does it mean to *“give grace to those who hear”* in the face of disagreement? These verses instruct us to *“put on”* and *“take off”* some different qualities. Which ones do you need to put on right now in life?
- Read Acts 6:1 – 7. What was the issue in the early church and why was the solution so important on all sides of the situation? What does it look like to be *“solution”* focused in the face of a need or area of conflict?
- Why is seeking Christ first always *“Priority One”* in the face of meeting any need or solving an area of conflict? What elements help keep Christ as the first priority in your life, especially when you are facing seasons of disagreement?