

Acts 6 –24 May 2020

“A Well-oiled...Organism”

Introduction

Jesus has risen from the dead and ascended to be seated at the right-hand of the Father.

Jesus has ordained there to be an “Age of the Church” empowered by His HS where He pours His attention toward THE WHOLE WORLD

The goal of the church is to being living witnesses of Who He is and to offer Christ’s plan of redemption.

The mission of the church has been established and implemented, now they’ll begin the practical sustainment of the work.

The mission will never change (Preach and teach redemption to glorify God), and the general principles of sustainment should never change as well.

Today, 3 Keys To Sustaining Your Ministry

1st Key to sustaining your ministry – Know Your Role (Chap 6:1-6)

Read Vs 1

1. There were Jews that were Hellenistic in culture and Jews that were Hebrew in culture.
 - a. Just as there are today (stoic traditionalists & eclectic free-spirits)
 - b. Same thing within the church today
2. Greek “widows were neglected in the...”
 - a. “Neglected” just means ‘overlooked’ – this is an administrative oversight not intentional
 - b. We’re called to care for those who can’t
3. This is a real physical (not spiritual problem)
 - a. Not a direct spiritual problem
 - b. But it is a big problem
 - i. It threatens to distract Apostles from calling
 - ii. And b/c widows are being mis-cared for.
4. This attempt at disunity in church is a real trick of the Devil.

Read Vs 2

1. Apostles recognize that there are different roles within the church
2. This is “organized religious” at its best
 - a. It’s thought out, planned out
 - b. Not hap-hazard
3. They know their role - focus on giving Word
 - a. Wrong for a CEO to empty trash regularly.
 - b. But he should be willing on occasion

Read Vs 3-6

1. This is the first choosing of Deacons
 - a. Deacon = attendant / physical minister
2. Easy ways to remember how Church leaders are established.
 - a. Pastors/Elders
 - i. Character – I Tim, Titus 1
 - ii. Calling – Moses (Exo 3), Paul (Gal 1)
 - iii. Confirmation–Men agree you know Jesus (Act 4)

- b. Deacons – V.E.T. them
 - i. Vs 3 – The disciples **Vet** possible deacons
 - 1. Notice the criteria in vs 3 & I Tim 3
 - 2. From the people bubble up 7 men who meet God’s criteria
 - ii. Vs 3 – Apostles **Entrust** them officially
 - 1. The collective gives ideas (to not miss any), then the leaders approve it.
 - iii. Vs 6 – Apostles **Touch** them
 - 1. Official acknowledgement of leadership and duty transferred to them
 - 2. The touch is a ‘point of faith’ to physically see God has positioned them
- 3. Remember the goal, we all have a role to play
 - a. Vs 4 – Apostles are to be in the Word
 - i. Ministering the physical needs is a distraction to their role, but is very needed!
- 4. Notice they chose 7 culturally Greek men
 - a. Wise – shows sensitivity to offended Greeks.

2nd Key to sustaining your ministry – Promote The Word (Chap 6:7-8)

Read Vs 7

1. What increased?
 - a. Faith in the Word of God!
 - b. B/c they stuck to their gifts & roles
 - c. They're not promoting people but the Word
2. Many priests believed!
 - a. They saw/heard of the veil ripping!!!
 - b. Many saw/heard Peter speak to the counsel!
 - c. Many already knew the scriptures!
 - d. Interesting – 1st deacons weren't priests.
 - i. Formal schooling again isn't high on the list of qualifications for church leadership

Read Vs 8

1. Stephen chosen to be one of 1st Deacons and went forward to do great things.

- a. Jesus said, ‘those faithful in little, will be given much to rule over’.
- b. Notice even deacons like Stephen did miracles, not just the Apostles.
 - i. Some would say only the Apostles did miracles to authenticate they’re from Jesus.
 - ii. Although Apostles were authenticated as from Christ this way, wasn’t only for the 12

SPECIAL NOTE: Some tend to downplay role of the deacon as trivial physical work.

1. Notice again vs 7
 - a. It’s b/c deacons were doing physical work that the Apostles could continue in the Word!
 - b. Playing YOUR role enables body to function.
 - c. Recognize that **physical ministry IS spiritual ministry!!!**
 - d. Physical deacon ministry promotes keeping people focused on the Word of God!

3rd Key to sustaining your ministry – Live By The Spirit (Chap 6:9-15)

Read Vs 9-10

1. These are Jews that confront Stephen
2. Some Jews were of the synagogue of Cilicia.
 - a. Saul (Paul) was from Tarsus of Cilicia.
3. Them not being “able to resist: Stephen can only be attributed to the power of the Holy Ghost.
 - a. Vs 3 – Find men full of the Spirit
 - b. Vs 5 – They chose men full of the Spirit
 - c. Vs 10 – Stephen spoke in the wisdom & power of the Holy Spirit!

Read Vs 11-12

1. Paul later relayed this collusion to author Luke.
2. Popular opinion can be easily shaped and can go either way, be careful.
 - a. Acts 4-5 the people sided with Apostles b/c they saw a miracle, now they side w/ leaders.
 - b. Can't follow masses, need to follow Spirit.

Read Vs 13-14

1. Stephen, no doubt, was telling them how Jesus fulfills the Law.
2. They want to twist his words as if he's saying that Jesus destroyed/replaced the Law.

Read Vs 15

1. Stephen is seen as the strong one among these leaders.
 - a. Stephen's full of power, wisdom & the HS
 - b. That's more powerful than these educated, positionally strong religious men.
2. "As the face of an angel"
 - a. There's no miracle here. It's a metaphor.
 - b. Not baby-faced, nor angry-face
 - c. But a confident, peaceful face.

And that's the prelude to Stephen Testimony of Acts 7

1. He'll give the most amazing history lesson to these religious men!! All leading to Jesus Christ!!

Conclusion

So, 3 keys to Sustaining Your Ministry as a “well-oiled organism”.

1. Know Your Role

- a. Each member of the body of Christ should perform in the giftings and calling to them.
- b. There are direct spiritual roles and physical roles that need completed

2. Promote The Word

- a. Even if your ministry isn't preaching the Word, doing your ministry enables the rest.
- b. It's b/c the Deacons did the physical service that the Word could continue to go out strongly thru the Apostles
- c. “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might” (Ecce 9:10)

3. Live By The Holy Spirit

- a. Popular opinion is fickle & will change
- b. Be led of the Spirit b/c He guides into truth