

Acts 6:1-7
CBBC
October 5, 2025

Introduction—

I. The church will always struggle with sin when it ministers.

We were reminded that since the Law in Deuteronomy, there was not be no real need. It is against God's law to let others who are part of the community be in need. Now, we have this new community, the church, made up of people who have been baptized by the Holy Spirit and have been transformed internally. It is amazing. We see this at the end of chapters 2, and 4. To be willing to put oneself at financial risk in order to take care of others' needs is incredible. We see that it was such a mark of virtue that Ananias and Sapphira were going to be deceptive and performative.

This is not just for the early church. We further command to take care of other believers, making sure that they never go without food, shelter, and their needs. That is not a command that is given to the government; it is given to the church. We are made capable of that sort of giving because we have been baptized by the Holy Spirit. He has taught us that we are pilgrims, everything we have is temporary... He has taught us that we will be held responsible for how we use what God has given us in the Last Judgement. He also reminds us that the first two commandments are focused upon loving our God, and then to love those around us as we love ourselves. From the beginning, the church was expected and equipped to take care of the needs of its people.

Man's sin nature is not far behind. Remember that the apostles were just imprisoned, then God released them. The religious leaders brought them back and

warned them not to talk about Christ. They were beaten and released, telling the leaders that they would continue to proclaim Christ crucified.

During all of this, we are told that the disciples are increasing in number. Disciples are equal to Christians. They are synonymous with one another. If you are one, then you are the other. All of this is happening, but we still struggle with our sin problems.

Here we see that there is a complaint from the Hellenes. Now, these are not Gentiles, but in this case, they are Jews who speak Greek. Remember that there were a lot of Jews who did not grow up in Jerusalem itself, but who were scattered all over the known world due to the various captivities. Many of them came back to Israel, but they came back not only Jewish, but also bringing the language and customs of their lands. They were outsiders. The Hellenic widows came and complained to the apostles, because when food and resources were being distributed, they were being neglected. It was all going to the hometown people. Scripture treats it as if their complaint was legitimate. This was happening.

I will pause for a moment to address something quickly. I am not a believer in systemic racism as it is defined politically today. We have done terrible things, but we have made amazing strides. But we have to remember that every generation is afraid of the outsider. We see that all the way through Scripture, and into the New Testament. The outsider could be someone we didn't grow up with, or someone of a different economic background, or school, or whatever. We have to keep teaching our children that we will always struggle with treating the outsider differently because of our sinful nature. The church is also vulnerable to it in all stages. Sometimes people are tempted to minister to the rich and forget the poor. We esteem the wrong people. We are

charisma-driven. That which appeals the most to our senses has to be the best for us. Paul really argues against that in I Corinthians. There needs to be that awareness.

God's answer to sin in ministry is maturing believers. The apostles know that this needs to be dealt with. The ministry needs to continue, and it needs to feed all of the believers, regardless of the sinful prejudices that people are struggling with. They say we can't spend more time administering this. There are a lot more believers, which means there are a lot of people to be fed.

They don't put together a huge new plan. They say, Pick the right people, and we will give them the authority to do this task. Who are the right people? They said to pick 7 of them, and then to make sure that they have a good reputation. They have to be known within the community. People need to speak to their personal integrity. I can trust that guy will do whatever is right, regardless of their prejudices. They have to be full of the Spirit, which means that they must be believers, because believers only have the Spirit, and they also need to be living wisely as believers. I do believe this extends back to the Old Testament idea of wisdom, which basically is skillful living before the Living God.

Paul expands on what that looks like over in **I Timothy 3 in verses 8-12**. He goes into deeper detail as to what that looks like. Let's walk through it. They must have a clear testimony in Christ. They need to have proven they are believers, not just someone who has just confessed Christ. They should be one woman, a man, managing their household. Dignified, not liars, and they take seriously what they are doing.

Godly people doing God's work make everything better.

Godly people get things done.

While the passage doesn't say anything explicitly that they fixed the problem, the fact that the problem is no longer mentioned tells us a lot. It also really focuses on the godliness of Stephen as we continue through this. It doesn't tell us what organizational system they used in order to solve the issue. It doesn't tell us what management style. But, we figure they must have solved it, because godly people want to make sure that godly things happen. In this case, it was making sure that the Hellenistic widows received what they needed. Growing in godliness means that they are thinking of the needs of others first, and that they desire to keep their word as they are Christians.

Godly people who minister gain a good reputation.

I Timothy 3:13 It is interesting to note that those who want to be deacons gain a good standing. People recognize them for their responsibility, and to serve well confirms in one's heart how great the Gospel is. If you want to see God work, put yourself where people need to be ministered to.

The universe watches when the church ministers. **Ephesians 4:10** tells us that when the church functions as it is supposed to, there are supernatural beings who watch what is going on. I don't know whether these are good or evil supernatural beings. Regardless, when the church ministers, it is evidence that God was right when He created the church through the Gospel. When deacons minister to other believers in the way that God has commanded, this is noticed by other beings.

Conclusion—Sin is always going to creep into ministry because we are sinful people. The key is not a better mousetrap or a more efficient way of doing things, it is personal holiness. It is godliness. Godly people want to minister. Godly people want to minister

well. They want to see it be accomplished. When Godly people minister, people are exalted, and God's plan is glorified.