



GROWING PAINS (ACTS 6:1-7)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The central function of the church is to proclaim the gospel, by both deed and word. The book of Acts adds to that statement that the good news must be proclaimed with boldness, as there will be enemies to the proclamation of the message of freedom in Jesus Christ. When the Good News is preached boldly, the church will grow, and that will cause growing pains both internally and externally. We balance the priority of evangelism (the synoptic Great Commission) with the priority of for the sheep (John's Great Commission). God will provide the leadership and infrastructure to make sure all needs are met.

2.0 ACTS 6:1-7

2.1 INTERNAL COMPLAINTS THREATEN THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL (ACTS 6:1)

The growth of the church comes with persecution from the outside and growing pains from within. The first internal problem of the church is not over a theological matter, but a logistical practice and it's threatening the unity of the church. The church being for all people means diversity (Hellenists and Hebrews)

within the church, which comes with its own challenges.

2.2 BALANCING IN-REACH AND OUTREACH (ACTS 6:2)

The church leaders don't ignore the problem, they take care of it immediately. The great commission is both inward (John) and outward (the Synoptics). John tells Peter "Care for my sheep" while in the Synoptic Gospels he says "Go and make disciples of all nations.

Preaching Point: Some are called to minister inside the church, some outside the church. Where are you called?

2.3 THE PRIORITY OF PROCLAMATION (ACTS 6:2)

The administrative growth of the church and internal strife can never get in the way of the main function of the church: the proclamation of the gospel.

Preaching Point: We must always be witnessing to the power of God in our lives, whether in act or deed.

2.4 APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION (ACTS 6:3)

This story demonstrates that in the working of the Holy Spirit in the world is not limited to the apostles. The apostolic gift for preaching and authority will be passed on from generation to generation within the church.

Preaching Point: Kingdom work is not to be limited to ordained clergy, but is the calling of all Christians. The Holy Spirit can work through you the same way he worked through these fishermen.

2.5 THE BIGGER PICTURE

This little wrinkle in the church leads to the story of Saul/Paul through Stephen. God uses the way we honor him to deal with conflict in the church to do a much bigger work.

Preaching Point: We must deal with conflict the right way within the church, and expect that God has big plans to redeem it.