THE CHURCH’S FIRST INTERNAL CRISIS

Acts 6:1-7

Introduction:

A. We have seen the Church’s leadership endure persecution and pressure
   1) They were put “in hold” 4:3
   2) They were “threatened” 4:17
   3) They were put in the, “common prison” 5:18
   4) They were “beaten” = dero = “to skin, flay, of animals; then slang, “to cudgel”, “to thrash”.

B. This is the first recorded post-resurrection problem recorded in the Bible. (God solved the problem of Annias and Saphira!
   1) This incident really occurred.
   2) It is written for our learning.

I. The Crisis was Created by Multiplying  vs. 1a

A. "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied."
   1) In contemporaneous time.
   2) "multiplied" = plethuno = “to make full”, “to increase”, “the number kept growing, at this time”

B. The growth of almost anything will create the potential for problems.
   1) Solomon said so... Ecces. 6:11 "when goods increase, they are increased that eat them."
   2) Children, families, countries, schools, etc.

II. The Crisis was Caused by Murmuring  Vs. 16

A. "there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration."
   1) "arose" = ginomai = “implying origin”, “to come into being”, “to become, or result”, “to take place”
   2) "murmuring" = gogguzo = "to utter in a low voice privately", "probably from the sound of air in a shell", "to manifest complaints"
   3) This may have been true, but it was an improper way to react because it offers no solution, only the worsening of a bad thing. (Based on some truth, erroneous interpretation and motive.)

B. God’s people should never murmur.
   1) It is unscriptural! Matt. 18:15-20
   2) It invariably grows and involves others.
   3) It is too dangerous! I Cor. 10:1-12

III. The Crisis was Shared with the Multitude

A. "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them."
   1) It was church business
   2) The entire church was informed
B. The greater harm of the problem  
1) "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables."
2) "reasonable" = harestos = "pleasing", pleasing to God, therefore it is not proper, fitting, in his sight.
3) Read 5:29 - This truth applies no matter who makes the request!
4) Pastors ought to obey God rather than men out of the Church or men in the church.

IV. The Solution was Suggested by the Apostles  
Vs. 3
A. The Church was to choose men.  
1) "look you out among you"  
2) "Pick out from among yourselves"

B. They were to chose qualified men  
Vs. 3
1) We have no right to overlook and to excuse what God commands! I Tim.3:7

C. What did the Pastor's plan to do?  
Vs. 4
1) People who attend church regularly rarely need visiting or counseling.

V. The Proposal Pleased the Church and They Acted on it  
Vs. 5-6
A. "And the saying pleased the whole multitude"  
1) The church came into unity  
2) They then, could act on truth

B. "whom they set before the Apostles"  
1) They co-operated in the effort  
2) Satisfaction and unity = co-operation

VI. The Crisis was Solved. Three Great Benefits Accrued to God's Work  
Vs. 7
A. "And the word of God increased"  
7a  
1) "increased" = auzano = "to receive increase", "to grow", "to grow up" "to grow"  
2) This is the only positive approach to doing God's work. Everything else always has built-in flaws that become instruments of total destruction. This is history's best lesson.

B. "and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly;  
7a  
1) "number" = harithmos = "a definite number"  
2) "multiplied" = pletheno = "to make full; hence to multiply", "increase", passive = "to be multiplied" They did not multiply themselves!  
3) "disciples" = mathetes = "a learner", "a pupil", one who follows both the teacher and the teaching.  
4) The increase or growth was "greatly", but this was not in Sunday School attendance. It was a growth in "learners and followers"
C. "and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith"
   1) The word of God affected false religion
   2) "company" = ochlos = "crowd", "very many"
   3) "obedient" = upakouo - "to hear" (with the idea of stealth, stillness, or
       attention in order to answer) "to listen and as a result to obey."
   4) This was, "to the faith", the whole thing.

VII. When Problems are Resolved According To God's Word, Things Always
     Work Out Well