

## Unit 31, Session 2: The Church Handled a Problem

**Big Picture Question: Why did Jesus become human? Jesus became human to obey His Father's plan and rescue sinners.**

**Memory Verse: Isaiah 53:5 – He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.**

**Christ Connection: The apostles believed that everyone in the church had an important job to do to serve God's people and help spread the gospel. Jesus wants us to serve others so that the message of His death and resurrection can be heard and believed all over the world.**

### **Bible Passage: Acts 6**

Find the passages together in your Bibles and read through them together. You could also read the paraphrase of all these passages below in blue. For younger kids, you may want to just read the bolded portions.

The Lord had added thousands of people to the number of believers in Jerusalem, and the church was still growing rapidly. More growth meant more diversity, a beautiful demonstration of God's creativity. However, more growth also meant more opportunities for conflict as the daily work of the ministry was being handled. While the majority of the church body was ethnically Jewish at this time, they were not all from the same place. The Hebrew Jews spoke mostly Aramaic and had spent their lives in Jerusalem. Meanwhile, the Hellenists spoke primarily Greek as a first language and were those who moved back to Jerusalem after the dispersion. As the members of the church shared their resources, the Hellenistic widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution (Acts 6:1). Scripture does not say whether this was intentional, but the context does make it clear that this was a problem that needed to be resolved. The apostles couldn't do everything and still effectively lead the church and preach the gospel (v. 2). They needed to share the burden of caring for the people with others.

In a scene similar to God's anointing of elders and officers to help Moses bear the burden of the people of Israel (Num 11:16-17), the apostles called upon the church to select "seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom" to help meet the needs of the people (Acts 6:3-6). Many of the men chosen were Hellenists themselves, so this group of believers would not likely be overlooked in the future (v. 5). While this problem may seem small, it demonstrates the godly, biblical process of conflict resolution among the members of the church. There is no room for ethnic or cultural bias among the people of God, no room for disunity. We are meant to be a diverse people, united by a common faith and Spirit, working together for a common purpose: the kingdom of God. When the people of God are united, the kingdom of God expands: "So the word of God spread, the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly in number, and a large group of priests became obedient to the faith" (6:7).

**In the time after Jesus' resurrection and return to heaven, more and more people believed in Him. But some of the believers complained.** The Jews who spoke Greek complained about the Jews who spoke Hebrew. **The Greek-speaking Jews thought the widows were being overlooked when the daily food was given out.** In the Old Testament, God told His people to take care of widows—women whose husbands had died.

**The twelve apostles gathered all the believers together.** (Matthias had been chosen to replace Judas.) They said, **"It isn't right for us to stop preaching about God to take care of all these daily concerns. So, brothers and sisters, choose seven men to take care of this."**

**The apostles said that the men should be of good character**—men who are wise and full of the Holy Spirit. These men should be obedient to God and be able to make good choices. **These seven men would take care of the daily business of the believers. Then the apostles could devote themselves to prayer and to preaching. Both jobs were important,** but the apostles should not stop teaching God's Word because hearing the Word was how people believed.

**Everyone agreed that this was a good idea. So they chose seven men:** Stephen, Philip, Prochorus (PRAK uh ruhs), Nicanor (nigh KAY nawr), Timon (TIGH mahn), Parmenas (PAHR mih nuhs), and Nicolaus (nik uh LAY uhs). **These men stood before Jesus' apostles, who prayed for them and laid their hands on them.**

**So the twelve apostles kept preaching about God. More and more people heard the truth about God, and more and more people in Jerusalem believed in Him. The church in Jerusalem grew as more disciples were made.**

**If you or your child have questions about what it looks like to follow Jesus in salvation or baptism, Pastor Sam would love to talk with you! Please feel free to contact him at [ssievers@lenexabaptist.com](mailto:ssievers@lenexabaptist.com).**