

Sermon Series Title: "The Office of Deacon"

Sermon Series Summary: We'll be taking a couple weeks to look at the heart, call, and qualifications of Deacon as we prepare for Elections.

Call: 2 Samuel 22:27

Text: Acts 6:1-7

Title: "The Calling of a Deacon"

Next Week's Call: 2 Samuel 22:28

Next Week's Text: 1 Timothy 3:8-13

Next Week's Title: "The Qualifications of a Deacon"

Future Calls: 2 Samuel 22:29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 47-49, 50-51

Future Titles: "Love" (Galatians 5:22-23, 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a), "Joy" (Galatians 5:22-23)

Fallen Condition Focus: The church neglected their Hellenist widows; like we neglect our broken.

Christ redeeming FCF: Christ is the greatest Deacon who served us and now empowers us to serve.

Central Truth: May we embody the mercy, service, truth, and love of God in Christ.

Summary: In our passage, the office of Deacon is established, because the Hellenist widows are being neglected. The apostles desire to serve the marginalized with mercy while not compromising Word and prayer. This shows us the heart of God in service, mercy, truth, and prayer, embodied in the church through Christ.

Reflective Questions:

1. Why was the office of Deacon established? What does this tell us about the office and the heart of God?
2. How do we embody this heart in our service, life, and worship?

I. Introduction

- A. Hook- previous sermon recap- heart of Deacon is the heart of service, which is the heart of God; moved by His compassion
 - B. Transition
 - C. Central Truth
 - D. Points
- II. The Crisis (vv. 1-2)
- A. 3000 to Pentecost- Acts 2, 5000 in Acts 4; God is growing the church and they were of “one heart and soul.” (v. 32) It almost seems perfect.
 - B. We see sin inside the church in Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5 and then sin from outside the church through persecution later in the chapter.
 - C. Acts 6- we see brokenness in the church as well.
 - 1. With the increase in growth, people are being marginalized- mainly the Hellenist widows.
 - 2. In Acts 4, members of the church would sell their lands and bring the proceeds to the apostles, and the apostles would distribute as any had need.
 - 3. Taking care of widows, orphans, foreigners, and other least of these has always been on the heart of God... and the people of God has always been marked by the mercy of God... they have been called to love and serve them. It’s no different for the NT church.
 - 4. Not only that, it’s the Hellenist widows. Hellenists are the Greek-speaking Jews. They did not grow in Israel, because of the exiles in Israelite history where they were dispersed. But they made their journey back to Jerusalem.
 - 1. You can see the growing frustration and possible church split with this conflict: serving the Hebrew widows but not the Hellenist widows.
 - 2. They were the least of the least of these.
 - D. It does not sound like the Hebrew apostles did this intentionally. This is part of the consequences of growth. “As you grow, you wear different clothes.” -P. David Chong
 - 1. Officer training- church growth requires different administrative organization.
 - E. Part of the crisis is the fact that there are more tables to serve and more mouths to feed, but the apostles must be devoted to Word and prayer.
 - F. In God’s providence, He establishes the office of Deacon.
- III. The Call (vv. 3-6)
- A. How?

1. Elect seven men of good repute (in good standing with the people; they respect their godliness; requiring relationship and exposure to this character)
 2. Full of the Spirit and of wisdom
 1. Bears the fruit of the Spirit
 2. Walks with Jesus
 3. Wise through Word and prayer
 4. Not a popularity contest or just voting on friends or not voting against enemies
 3. Spiritual qualifications because these are spiritual responsibilities and service.
 1. These qualifications are very similar to Elder. This shows us that these are two different callings.
 4. They end up electing all Hellenist Deacons.
 1. They see the need and the growing Hellenist Christians, and they elect men who will represent and serve this need/group.
 5. The apostles lay their hands on them and pray for them- ordination
- B. For what purpose?
1. Apostles and Elders today- Word and prayer; matters of shepherding according to 1 Peter 5
 2. Deacons- finance/property management, service, and mercy (serving the least of these)
- C. This call shows us the heart of God, which is the heart of the church. Our God is a Shepherding God... a true God who reveals Himself through His Word... a God that desires relationship with us through prayer... a God who serves us and shows mercy to us. This is a reminder for us to go back to the Word, prayer, stewardship, service, and mercy. This is what it means for us to grow in the richness of the gospel.

IV. The Christ (v. 7)

- A. With both Elders and Deacons serving... living out the heart of God, Word of God increases, the number of disciples multiply greatly, and a great many priests come to Christ.
- B. How does this all come together? How is this possible? How can we have the heart of God?
- C. It's because Jesus is the ultimate Deacon. He is the embodiment of the heart of God for us. He saw us in our need... as the least of these, and He served us.
 1. He did not come to be served but to serve and be a ransom for many (Luke 22:24-27). He served us as the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 52-53), emptying Himself (Philippians 2:7).

2. One of his last acts with his disciples... the night before he would be crucified... the night of his betrayal... he went down to wash His disciples' feet (John 13)
 3. We were the ones outcast like the Hellenist widows, and He gave us food to eat.
 4. We were blind and lost in our sin, and He shared the truth with us through His Word... and by being the Word.
 1. He is the Good Shepherd (the ultimate Elder) that leaves the 99 for the 1. He is the Good Shepherd that laid down His life for His sheep.
 5. We are the ones in need and He prays for us.
 6. This is all through His sacrifice of service in the cross.
 7. Jesus is prophet, king, and priest. This is represented in the offices of Teaching Elder, Ruling Elder, and Deacon.
- D. And what does Jesus say? As He has washed our feet, we are called to wash one another's feet (John 13:14).
1. We are called to have this heart to show mercy, to serve, to be devoted to Word and prayer... for our officers and also for our church.