



Power From on High

Series: Power From On High.

Title: The Organized Church, Part 1

Lesson: 42

Text: Acts 6:1-7

Date: May 14, 2023

Four strategies that Satan uses to destroy the church.

1. Persecution

2. Corruption

3. _____

Acts 6:1–7 Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. 2 So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. 3 “Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. 4 “But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” 5 The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. 6 And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them. 7 The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the

disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

Acts 6:1–7 Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food.

“complaint” [gongysmos]

“widows”

Exodus 22:22–24 “You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. 23 “If you afflict him at all, and if he does cry out to Me, I will surely hear his cry; 24 and My anger will be kindled, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.

Psalms 68:5 A father of the fatherless and a judge for the widows, Is God in His holy habitation.

Deuteronomy 27:19 ‘Cursed is he who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan, and widow.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

What is proper religion in the N.T.?

James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Acts 6:1–7 Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food.

“Hellenistic Jews” (Grecian Jews)

“native Jews”

2 So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples

Four strategies that Satan uses to destroy the church.

1. Persecution
2. Corruption
3. Disunity

4. _____

“desirable” [arestos]

This is the primary focus entire scene for three reason.

1. Their priority is stated twice

2 So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables.

4 “But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

2. God’s word is the greatest concern.

2 So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable for us to neglect **THE WORD OF GOD** in order to serve tables

4 “But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the **MINISTRY OF THE WORD.**

7 **THE WORD OF GOD** kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase ...

Acts is a transitional book.

Jesus → Apostles
Old Covenant → New Covenant
Nation of Israel → Gentiles
Apostolic Age → Church Age
Apostles → Elders (Pastors)
Seven men → Deacons

The first mention of elders.

Acts 11:30 And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the **ELDERS.**

The apostles and elders are mentioned together.

Acts 15:2 And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the **APOSTLES AND ELDERS** concerning this issue.

Acts 15:4 When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the **APOSTLES AND THE**

ELDERS, and they reported all that God had done with them.

Acts 15:6 The **APOSTLES AND THE ELDERS** came together to look into this matter.

Acts 15:22 Then it seemed good to the **APOSTLES AND THE ELDERS**, with the whole church, to choose men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas—Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren,

Acts 15:23 and they sent this letter by them, “**The APOSTLES AND THE BRETEREN WHO ARE THE ELDERS**, to the brethren in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia who are from the Gentiles, greetings.

Acts 16:4 Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees which had been decided upon by the **APOSTLES AND ELDERS** who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe.

The devil is still working today at distracting elders.

1. Pastors have become like cheerleaders.
2. Pastors are expected to be marketing strategists.

3. The elders's wrong priorities.

4. The sinful behavior of rock-star pastors.

5. Eldership has been weakened by American democracy.

Elders are comparable to the apostles in four ways:

1. They are to _____.

1 Timothy 5:17 The elders who **RULE** well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

**2. They share the same priority of _____
God's Word.**

1 Timothy 3:2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, **ABLE TO TEACH,**

Titus 1:7–9 For the overseer must be above reproach as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, 8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, 9 **HOLDING FAST THE FAITHFUL WORD** which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to **EXHORT IN SOUND DOCTRINE** and to **REFUTE THOSE WHO CONTRADICT**.

“exhort” / “refute”

**3. There should be a _____
of elders.**

Acts 14:23 When they had appointed **ELDERS** for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Acts 20:17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the **ELDERS** of the church.

James 5:14 Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the **ELDERS** of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;

4. Elders are to be _____.

1 Timothy 3:1–7 It is a trustworthy statement: if any **MAN** aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work **HE** desires to do. 2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the **HUSBAND** of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. 4 **HE** must be one who manages **HIS** own household well, keeping **HIS** children under control with all dignity 5 (but if a **MAN** does not know how to manage **HIS** own household, how will **HE** take care of the church of God?), 6 and not a new convert, so that **HE** will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. 7 And **HE** must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that **HE** will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Implication

Pastors are to guard against anything that might distract them from their _____ priority of ministering God's Word.

Discussion Guide

1. How important is unity in the church? If yes, then why?

Have you experienced a church split or strife in the church? If so, what happened and was it resolved?

What does our passage teach us about grumbling?

2. Have you had a past church experience where the preaching of God's Word wasn't a priority? What was the distraction? Was it the pastor's fault or the expectations of the congregation?

3. The lesson today pointed out five distractions that have weakened the role of eldership. Which one do you believe is the most seductive? Can you think of others?

4. As a congregation, what can you do to ensure that Matthew and I maintain our focus on ministering God's Word?

ANSWERS: Disunity, Distraction, rule, teaching, plurality, men, God-given