

## \_Acts 6

v.1 there are always those who are murmuring- ie, Moses in the desert. Apostles, Pharisees

**Against the Hebrews by the Hellenists:** The **Hebrews** were those Jews more inclined to embrace Jewish culture and were mostly from Judea.

The **Hellenists** were those Jews more inclined to embrace Greek culture and mostly were from the *Diaspora* (from all over the Roman Empire).

- To oversimplify, **Hebrews** tended to regard **Hellenists** as unspiritual compromisers with Greek culture, and **Hellenists** regarded **Hebrews** as holier-than-thou traditionalists. There was already a natural suspicion between the two groups, and Satan tried to take advantage of that standing suspicion.

- It's important to remember that though the titles **Hebrews** and **Hellenists** are used, *these were Christians, followers of Jesus*. They were all from a Jewish background, but they had all embraced Jesus as their Messiah.

**The daily distribution:** The early church took its responsibility to help support **widows** seriously because they often had no other support; but they also expected these widows to serve the church faithfully ([1 Timothy 5:3-16](#)).

There is the hint here of a growing division between the religious leaders and the early followers of Jesus. The care of widows and orphans was an important part of Jewish life, and normally the temple authorities organized the distribution to the needy. Yet it seems that the Christian widows were not cared for by the Jewish leaders; probably because they didn't like the fact that the apostles kept preaching Jesus when they were told to stop.

### **Because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution:**

Apparently, some of the Christians from a Hellenistic background believed that the widows among the Hebrew Christians received better care.

“It is not suggested that the oversight was deliberate . . . more probably the cause was poor administration or supervision.” (Stott)

Satan loves to use an unintentional wrong to begin a conflict. The **Hebrews** were right in their *hearts*, and the **Hellenists** were right in their *facts*. These were perfect conditions for a church-splitting conflict.

v.2-4 from among you- full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom- spiritually and practically minded

Men of good reputation- expounded in Timothy 3-

Full of the Holy Spirit-

**Eph. 5:17 through Eph. 5:22** <sup>17</sup>Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. <sup>18</sup>And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup>speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, <sup>20</sup>giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup>submitting to one another in the fear of **God**.

**Col. 3:16 through Col. 3:18** <sup>16</sup>Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. <sup>17</sup>And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Ironside- If to be filled with the Word is equal in result to being filled with the Spirit to being filled with the Spirit, then it should be clear that the Word filled Christian is the Spirit filled Christian. **We see the results with Stephen and Philip as they expound the Word.**

Full of wisdom- from being filled with the word<sup>6</sup>

*Proverbs 2 For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding*

*Proverbs 9 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*

v. 5 Stephen full of faith also- Hebrews 11-

**Heb. 11:1 through Heb. 11:3** <sup>1</sup>Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. <sup>2</sup>For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. <sup>3</sup>By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

**James 2:17 through James 2:18** <sup>17</sup>Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. <sup>18</sup>But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without **your** works, and I will show you my faith by **my** works.

The testimony of faith always has outward show of love, this is the hallmark of the Holy Spirit

v.6 When they had prayed- make sure it is God calling

- they laid hands- became one, gave their authority, their commitment
- we take this very seriously

What needs to be done in this body?

Home groups,  
children's ministry teachers and helpers,  
places for people to stay,  
Food  
Cleaning  
Lawn  
Prayer ministries  
Nursing home ministry

v.8 Stephen full of the Holy Spirit, wisdom, faith, power

Do we submit ourselves to whatever God has called us to no matter how small or how large? There are no small tasks in God's kingdom- **We are doing a great work**

*Luke 16:10 through Luke 16:11 <sup>10</sup>He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.  
<sup>11</sup>Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?*

v.8 Stephen did wonders and signs- God was using him while he served in what some would consider a menial capacity

- although there were signs and wonders, they are not recorded, the message is

v.9 again dissention comes- Satan wants the work to stop, there was division among the church about the widows, now there is dissention, persecution to come

v.10 not able to resist wisdom and Spirit, they attacked behind the scenes

v.12 stirred up the people

- *2 Timothy 1:6* says stir up the gift of God in you

- *Hebrews 10:24* says to consider one another to stir up love and good  
works

- *2 Peter 3* tells us to stir up pure minds as we remember the Word

- **we are not to stir up strife and dissention**

v.13-14 they take his words, actually Jesus' words and try to manipulate and take out of context

v.15 as this railing accusations come in, Stephen has the face of an angel