

“Deacon Qualifications – Full of Wisdom”

Acts 6:1-7

(Preached at Trinity, March 9, 2005)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. We've been examining the qualifications of the first deacons called to serve the Church of Christ. As we've seen, this passage does several things.
 - A. It introduces the problem and describes the solution. Because of a dispute over the daily distribution of food among the widows the Apostles told the church to select seven men to oversee the work. Their service would allow the Apostles to continue in prayer and the ministry of the Word.
 - B. The passage gives us some insight into the priorities of the early church. They were concerned about the unity and the organization of the church and placed a high priority in prayer and the ministry of the Word.
 - C. This passage also introduces the office of deacon describing the work and qualifications.
2. We've been looking at these qualifications.

Acts 6:3 – “Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.”

 - A. We've seen the nature of their character – they must be “men of honest report”
A deacon must have a good reputation.
 - B. We've also looked at the nature of their spirituality – they must be men “full of the Holy Ghost”
A deacon must be submissive to the Spirit of God.
3. Tonight I want to conclude this verse by looking at the final two qualifications – one stated, one implied.
 - A. They must be “full of wisdom”
 - B. They must be faithful laborers. The apostles were looking for men to appoint over this business.
4. What does it mean to be full of wisdom?
 - A. We are speaking primarily of spiritual wisdom
 1. Lost men can gain great amounts of knowledge
 - a. We have put a man on the moon
 - b. Modern computers are amazing, laptops
(USB flash memory storage)
 - c. Medical advances – 1964 Leukemia cure rate 4%, 2005 – 80-90%
 2. In terms of spiritual understanding most are completely ignorant
 - B. We are not dismissing the importance of common knowledge
 1. Deacons have budgets to prepare
 2. Deacons have buildings to maintain
 3. Deacons should have some good common sense

4. Deacons should be competent in administration
 5. The wisdom spoken of here, however, is speaking primarily of spiritual wisdom
- I. The Deacon must first have spiritual life
- A. Spiritual wisdom demands a new birth – our heart, mind, and soul must all be renewed
 1. Our Lord's words to Nicodemus
John 3:3 – "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
 2. Spiritual understanding is one of the marks that identifies a believer
1 Timothy 2:4 – "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."
2 Timothy 2:25 – "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;"
 - B. Spiritual understanding demands illumination
 1. Without this illumination the lost man cannot understand spiritual things
1 Corinthians 2:14 – "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned."
 2. All truth is applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth
John 14:26 – "But the Comforter, *which* is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
 3. Without this illumination, spiritual understanding is impossible
The Apostle Paul describe it as, "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."
 - C. Jesus Christ has been made unto us wisdom – in other words, He has granted unto us His wisdom to replace our own foolish wisdom
1 Corinthians 1:30 – "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."
Paul describes it as the mind of Christ
1 Corinthians 2:16 – "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."
- II. This wisdom is both instant and progressive
- A. Upon Regeneration we are given spiritual understanding but this continues to increase
 1. Our minds are being progressively illuminated so that we view God properly
2 Corinthians 4:6 – "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."
a. We are granted the ability to know Him properly
To see His holiness, His goodness –

- b. To properly reverence Him
"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"
 - 2. Our minds are illuminated to receive God's Word properly and apply it properly
Luke 24:45 – "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,"
1 Thessalonians 2:13 – "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."
 - a. A believer does not dispute the authority of the Bible
 - b. A believer does not question God's Law
God's Law is for our good.
 - c. The spiritual man sees the need to study, meditate
 - 3. We are granted the wisdom to trust God more and more
 - a. The lost man always sees a total trust in God foolishness
 - b. God illuminates our mind to show us the great glory of a life in Christ
Ephesians 1:17-19 – "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,"
 - 4. We are granted the wisdom to see the world differently
 - a. God grants us wisdom to see life with the right perspective
Without Christ life is vanity, empty, useless
 - b. We are able to see with eternal eyes – we see beyond this life
 - c. Material things no longer have the same value. They no longer own us
- III. The deacon is one who has progressively grown in this wisdom – He is "full of wisdom"
 - A. He has a greater knowledge of Christ
 - 1. Of His excellence, of His love – **See Eph. 3:14-19**
2 Peter 3:18 – "But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen."
 - 2. We begin as babes in Christ – spiritual infants
1 Peter 2:2 – "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:"
 - 3. The deacon must be one who has grown beyond infancy
He has a passion for Christ

- B. The deacon has a greater understanding of God's Word
1. He is able to apply it to the various situations that arise in the church
1 Chronicles speaks of such men
1 Chronicles 12:32 – “And of the children of Issachar, *which were men* that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them *were* two hundred; and all their brethren *were* at their commandment.
 2. This has come through disciplined study
Psalms 119:99 – “I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies *are* my meditation.”
Ephesians 5:15-17 – “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*.”
2 Timothy 3:16-17 – “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”
- C. He recognizes his own weakness and deficiencies
1. The immature believer tends to overestimate himself
 2. The man full of wisdom knows his weaknesses and limitations and prays to God continually for wisdom
James 1:5 – “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”
Psalms 119:169 – “Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD: give me understanding according to thy word.”
- IV. We also find as an indirect qualification a desire to labor and be used of the Lord
- A. In **Verse 3** we find that the apostles were looking for men “whom we may appoint over this business”
1. The word for “business” is $\chi\rho\varepsilon\iota\alpha$ – it can be translated in various ways
ESV – duty; NAS – task
 2. This implies the expenditure of energy, work
 3. $\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\nu\omicron\varsigma$ - The deacon should have the gift of service
 - a. God gave names for the offices that describe their function
Pastor/Bishop/Elders – feed and oversee the flock with wisdom and maturity. Deacons serve the flock. They give their energy to details that would keep the pastors from prayer and the ministry of the Word.
 - b. These early deacons were given the responsibility of going from house to house caring for the daily affairs of the congregation. The church would have consisted of several thousand people by this time.

- B. Holding an office in the church of Christ demands great attention to duty
1. It demands having a mind to work
We read in Nehemiah that those returning from captivity were like this
Nehemiah 4:6 – “So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.”
 2. A Professor in a Theological College in an opening address to freshmen spoke – “Gentlemen, you need three things if you are to be successful; gifts, grace (refinement, charm), and gumption. We can do nothing to help you as to the first; I believe God has given you the gifts; we can by training and prayer help you to gain grace; but if you have not gumption neither God nor man can help you, and I advise you not to continue your studies.”
 3. The man who serves the office of deacon well is greatly blessed
1 Timothy 3:13 – “For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

Conclusion:

1. The deacon has to be a man of integrity. He must have the gift of service. He must be a man full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. He must be grave, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience.
2. The deacon’s life has been one that has demonstrated these qualities. He has been be tested to determine if this is so.
1 Timothy 3:10 – “And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found* blameless.”
δοκιμάζω - to test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing is genuine or not)
3. I believe God has blessed Trinity with such men. Pray for them as they serve our church.