

EVERY MEMBER A MINISTER

Acts 6:1–7, June 14, 2026

ACTS: THE ROAD BEFORE US, Sermon 6

Big Idea: *God never designed His church around a few people doing ministry for everyone else. He designed it for every member to be a minister — and when leaders release that vision rather than resist it, the mission multiplies.*

1. [1] INTRODUCTION: WHO COMES TO MIND?

- a. When you hear the word *minister*, who do you picture?
 - i. Maybe someone in a suit? (less so here at Tru!)
 - ii. Probably someone with a seminary degree.
 - iii. Someone who stands up here and preaches
 1. or visits people in the hospital or leads a team?
 - iv. Someone who gets paid for it.
- b. Here's what I want to suggest this morning:
 - i. that picture is incomplete.
 - ii. Not slightly off — but fundamentally and critically incomplete.
- c. [2] Our passage today in Acts 6 is the clearest proof.
 - i. **God never designed His church around professional ministers doing the work while everyone else watches.**
 - ii. **He designed it for every member to be a minister.**
 - iii. And that's not a motivational slogan.
 - iv. That's God's operating manual for his church from the very beginning!
- d. **We've been walking through Acts together this summer**, watching the Spirit move and watching ordinary people do extraordinary things.
 - i. Every week we come back to the same commission that launched everything:
 - ii. [3] **"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."** — Acts 1:8
 1. And that's not just for them back then and there,
 - a. This is still the roadmap of Jesus' call for us today!
 2. The maps on our walls aren't mere decoration.
 3. They're each a reminder of where this is headed for us:
 - a. St. George. Manhattan. Wamego.
 - b. Riley and Pottawatomie Counties. Greater Kansas. The world.

- e. We've watched this early church face opposition from outside —
 - i. arrests, threats, floggings.
- f. We've watched it face pressure from inside —
 - i. deception, fear, conflict.
- g. And every time, God has kept the mission moving. **The road keeps going.**
- h. Now in Chapter 6, the early church hits up against this critical question of who does the ministry
 - i. and its response will set a pattern for everything that follows.

2. THE FIRST GROWING PAIN

- a. **[4] "In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food." — Acts 6:1**
- b. The church had just gotten through some crazy stuff. But they were pulling together. Things were going great!
 - i. And then.....A complaint arises (typical!):
- c. Some widows are being overlooked in the daily food distribution.
 - i. Specifically, the Hellenistic Jewish widows —
 - 1. Jewish believers who had adopted Greek language and culture.
 - 2. Many of them were likely immigrants who had traveled to Jerusalem for Pentecost, become disciples of Jesus, and stayed.
 - 3. They were part of the same community that, back in Acts 2, was sharing everything and meeting needs daily.
- d. But the community has grown significantly since then, and the cracks in the system are showing.
- e. We don't know exactly why these particular widows were being overlooked.
 - i. Luke doesn't tell us.
 - ii. Maybe it was accidental.
 - iii. Maybe cultural bias was at play —
 - 1. the very human tendency to care first for people who look and sound most like us.
 - iv. We simply don't know.
- f. What we do know is that the concern is legitimate.
 - i. Real needs exist. Real people are being missed.

- g. And whatever the cause, the community is now large enough that the relational bandwidth of a handful of apostles can no longer reach everyone.
- h. Notice what the apostles don't do.
 - i. They don't dismiss the complaint.
 - ii. They don't get defensive
- i. **They take it seriously, but without taking sides or blaming.**
 - i. The mission of Jesus has always involved caring for the vulnerable.
 - ii. The church doesn't exist simply to preach.
 - 1. It exists to embody the love of Christ —
 - iii. So the concern matters.
 - 1. The widows matter. The complaint matters.
- j. But — and this is the crucial turn — the apostles understand that solving the right problem the wrong way could create an even bigger problem.
 - i. Because here's a temptation every growing church eventually faces:
 - 1. to let urgent needs crowd out primary callings.
 - 2. To let the immediate and pressing pull leaders away from the essential and irreplaceable.
 - a. And that's exactly what the apostles are careful to avoid.

3. KNOW YOUR CALLING

- a. **[5] "So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, 'It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.'" — Acts 6:2–4**
- b. At first glance, the apostles almost sound insensitive.
 - i. We shouldn't wait on tables?
- c. But this isn't arrogance.
 - i. This isn't saying some ministry is sacred and other ministry is menial.
- d. The apostles aren't claiming to be above the work.
 - i. They're saying the work is too important to be handled by their divided attention.
- e. The apostles are saying:
 - i. the widows deserve dedicated servants,

- ii. not the scattered attention of people already carrying irreplaceable responsibilities elsewhere.
 - iii. No single leader can do everything.
 - 1. No pastor, elder, or volunteer.
 - iv. **God never designed His church around a handful of people doing all the ministry.**
 - 1. **He designed it for every member to be a minister!**
- f. Paul said it clearly in Ephesians 4 —
- i. **[6] 11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ... From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Ephesians 4:11–12, 16).**
- g. The goal isn't that the pastor does ministry.
- i. The goal is that the pastor equips ministers.
 - 1. And the ministers? They're sitting right here.
- h. Notice the apostles' response.
- i. They don't work longer hours.
 - ii. They don't start micromanaging.
 - iii. They don't tighten their grip on the operation.
- i. **They release ministry.**
- i. That is the genius —and the profound countercultural challenge—of Acts 6.

4. THE UPSIDE DOWN KINGDOM

- a. Here is where Acts 6 collides head-on with the way our world thinks about leadership.
- i. And I think if we're honest, it collides with the way most of us instinctively think about it too.
- b. [7] The world says: Leadership means accumulating influence.**
- i. **The kingdom says: Leadership means giving influence away.**
 - ii. Our culture measures a great leader by how much power they hold.
 - 1. How much money they make.
 - 2. How many people depend on them – follow them
 - 3. How many decisions flow through them.
 - 4. How indispensable they've become.

5. The worldly goal is to be the hub — the one everything passes through.
- iii. Not so in God's Upside-Down Kingdom.
 1. In Acts 6, the apostles intentionally make themselves less central.
 2. They push responsibility outward.
 3. They distribute authority.
 4. They step back so others can step forward.
- iv. And Luke calls it the turning point that led to multiplication growth.
- v. The world measures leaders by how many people serve them.
 1. The kingdom measures leaders by how many people they equip to serve others.

c. [8] The world worships competence.

- i. **The kingdom prioritizes character.**
- ii. If the apostles were working from our cultural playbook, they'd be evaluating organizational talent:
 1. Prior experience. A strong personality. Credentials.
 2. The best résumé. The candidate most likely to hit their metrics.
- iii. Instead, they ask two truly basic questions:
 1. Are they known to be full of the Holy Spirit?
 2. Are they known to be wise?
- iv. That's almost offensively simple to our ears.
 1. What about skills? Experience? What about proven results?
- v. And here's the answer:
 1. skills can be taught, but character must be formed.
 2. Skills are the what — character is the who.
 - 3. You cannot manufacture spiritual integrity on demand.**
- vi. The early church recruited like a family of disciples.
 1. Much of the modern church recruits like a business.

d. [9] The world fears failure.

- i. **The kingdom embraces risk.**
- ii. The apostles are handing significant ministry responsibility to relatively unknown, UNPROVEN people.
- iii. As far as we know, these seven have no established track record.
 1. No stage they've performed on.
 2. No ministry portfolio.
- iv. They're ordinary people. And the apostles release them anyway.

1. Because that's always how multiplication works.
 - a. You never know who God is preparing.
 - b. You never know what He's building in the person sitting two rows away from you.

v. Every mature leader started as somebody's risky investment!

1. Somebody took a chance on them.
2. Somebody let them teach before they were polished.
3. Somebody let them lead before they had all the answers.
4. Somebody let them try — and let them fail — and believed it wasn't the end of the story.

vi. That's exactly what's happening in Acts 6.

e. [10] The world says: If you want it done right, do it yourself.

i. **The kingdom says: "If you want multiplication, equip others."**

ii. Okay. This one is personal for me.

iii. PERSONAL STORY ABOUT CONTROL/DELEGATION:

1. One of the tendencies I struggle with personally is a bent toward control
2. Just Doing it myself.
 - a. Because I can do it better and more reliably
3. Years ago, during my years as an administrative pastor at a previous church,
 - a. I remember arguing with my supervisor who saw was trying to take responsibilities off my plate
 - b. Arguing for why I needed to do them
 - c. And that no one else could
 - d. It felt safer, faster, or better to do it myself.
4. And yet, at the same time, I've also experienced the frustration of being on the other end of things from leaders above me
 - a. Leaders who wanted to keep all the responsibilities for themselves.
 - b. Leaders who wouldn't let me grow and lead out
 - c. Without micromanaging
5. The more I've grown as a disciple and a leader, the more I've been shifting
 - a. I'm still in process!

6. But it's my growing conviction that I do my best leadership in giving it away,
 - a. And it's shaping the way I'm trying to lead at our church right now.
7. That's why we're committed to raising up others. To sharing leadership and working in teams
 - a. That's why I don't preach 100% of the time
 - b. Or personally disciple everyone who asks me.
 - c. It's why I'm no longer leading our life group
 - d. Or serving as a volunteer with the youth group
8. I'm convinced that my job is to invest in and help raise up others HERE to do the work of ministry – even when that's not what everyone expects from me
9. And at the end of the day, if I can set the overall vision and provide goals and guiderails, and then if others lead 60-70% the way I would have,
 - a. **I'm calling that not only OK, but a total win!**
- iv. I know every parent feels this tension.
 1. Every business owner feels this.
 2. Every pastor feels this.
 3. Every volunteer leader feels this.
- v. The experienced person often can do it better.
 1. Faster, cleaner, more efficiently. I know that feeling.
- vi. But that's the wrong question.
 1. The question isn't: "Can I do it better?"
 2. The question is: "Will the kingdom be stronger five years from now if I keep doing it myself, or release it to others?"
- vii. The apostles probably could have managed the food distribution.
 1. That wasn't the point.
- viii. The point was that the church needed more leaders,
 1. and releasing ministry was the only path to getting them.
- ix. Acts 6 answers the question before we finish asking it.
 1. **The kingdom grows when ministry is released.**

5. [11] WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

- a. So who did the church actually choose?

- i. Full of the Spirit. Full of wisdom.
 - 1. That's the entire criteria.
- b. And here's what I love about this barebones list: it is wonderfully broad.
- c. Most people sitting in this room could pursue these things.
 - i. You don't need a seminary degree.
 - ii. You don't need a specific personality type.
 - 1. Nor a ton of official experience
 - iii. You don't need to feel especially gifted or especially ready.
 - iv. You just need to walk closely with Jesus.
 - 1. And to be known for wisdom and trustworthiness and spiritual integrity.
- d. Those are things anyone can pursue.
- e. Those are things the Spirit produces in available people.
- f. **[12] "This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them." — Acts 6:5–6**
- g. Notice something the apostles do here that is easy to miss:
 - i. They don't pick the seven themselves.
 - ii. The whole congregation discerns, chooses, and presents them.
- h. That's enormous.
- i. The apostles aren't just assigning tasks,
- j. They're distributing real responsibility — and real authority.
 - i. They MUST be matched for this to work
 - ii. Responsibility without authority creates frustration.
 - iii. Authority without responsibility creates chaos and abuse.
 - 1. Healthy leadership requires both.
 - 2. The apostles give both.
 - 3. They say to the church in effect: We trust you.
 - a. Not just with the work.
 - b. With the discernment.
 - c. With the decision.
- k. The people of the church aren't treated as spectators.
 - i. They're treated as participants.
 - ii. As ministers.

- iii. As people capable of hearing God's voice and recognizing godly leadership within their own community.
- I. And the commissioning matters too —
 - i. the prayer, the laying on of hands.
 - ii. This public act says something to the whole church:
 - 1. these people serve in the name of Christ, and we honor them for it.
 - iii. At this moment in Acts, Stephen isn't famous. Philip isn't famous.
 - 1. They're just ordinary people —
 - 2. available, trustworthy, Spirit-filled —
 - iv. and the apostles commission and release them into potential they cannot yet see.
- m. That's why we work hard to also commission servant leaders here at Tru.
 - i. We lay hands on and pray over new staff and elders
 - ii. New LIFE Group leaders
 - iii. New Parents
 - iv. Those who are going out from us
- n. That mini-ceremony creates a culture.
 - i. It says that stepping into servant-leadership is recognized here.
 - ii. It is celebrated here. It is blessed.
- o. Every person we commission publicly (ceremonially or otherwise!) sends an unspoken invitation to everyone who hasn't stepped up yet.

6. WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE AT TRU

- a. Let me get specific.
 - i. Because this isn't primarily a church history lesson.
 - ii. This is a vision for the kind of church God is calling us to be.
- b. I don't dream about a church where a few professionals do ministry for everyone else.
 - i. I don't dream about a church where people show up on Sunday, receive services, go home, and call it discipleship.
 - ii. I don't dream about a church where real leadership belongs exclusively to paid staff and maybe the elders.
- c. I dream about a church full of Acts 6 people!
 - i. People who notice a need and step toward it.
 - ii. People who initiate — who make the phone call, send the text, show up.

- iii. People who organize meal trains and check on the sick
- iv. People who lead portions of LIFE Group.
- v. People who mentor younger believers.
- vi. People who serve in children's ministry and youth ministry not because someone guilted them into it but because they recognize it as their ministry.
 - 1. And as some of the most strategic in our church!
- vii. People who take ownership of things that need doing and simply do them.
 - 1. People like Chris Swanson stepping up to give organization and leadership to our building/facilities volunteer team.
 - 2. Like Lynda Reimer letting Jenn know she's up for helping serve in our kids ministry
 - 3. People like Kailee who's served faithfully with the youth for years.
 - a. And like Mya, Zeus, and Wayne who've stepped in to serve recently.
 - 4. Like Amber Pontious who initiated the discipleship signup and is making our daily Acts study guides
 - 5. People like Effie who organized meals for the Fentons during their season of stress and grief with baby Ida.
 - 6. People like Lydia Barrett who initiated the Immanual Journaling workshop and the women's group
 - 7. People like Juan stepping up to get discipled, and now looking to offer that to others
 - 8. People like Tara who not only said yes to keeping our church's books, but came over on her lunch break to bring fans and shop vacs when the church flooded Tuesday.
 - a. And like Jason Wainwright, Aaron and Holden Johnson who came right over to help too
 - 9. People like Brian and Beth Smoller who see the need for another LIFE Group and desire to reach their neighbors, and are working now to help launch and lead a new group this fall.
 - 10. I could go on.
- d. Because, as we've said before, leadership isn't primarily a position.
 - i. Leadership is an action
 - ii. It's saying yes – taking initiative for the good of others.
- e. If we look at those maps on our walls and actually mean them —**

- i. if Acts 1:8 is really the road we're still on —
- ii. **then the staff and elders cannot be the primary ministry workforce for this mission.**
- iii. We can't do it. The math doesn't work. The mission is too large.
- iv. We cannot disciple enough people ourselves.
 - 1. We cannot start enough groups ourselves.
 - 2. We cannot reach enough neighbors ourselves.
 - 3. We cannot pastor enough people ourselves.
 - 4. And Jesus doesn't want us to try!
- v. **The future of this church depends on ordinary believers IN THIS CHURCH becoming active, Spirit-led participants in God's mission.**

f. TRU BHAGGS CONNECT

- i. If we're going to see 30 people in genuine multiplicative discipling relationships,
 - 1. that won't happen just through a well-done program.
 - 2. It'll happen through Acts 6 people willing to disciple one or two people at a time – whether they've done it before or not!
- ii. If we're going to see 6 healthy LIFE Groups by year's end,
 - 1. it won't happen through the elders running all of them.
 - 2. It'll happen through Acts 6 regular-people leaders stepping up to lead.
- iii. If we will contribute to planting a church this year — and I believe we will,
 - 1. it won't happen because we hired the right staff.
 - 2. It'll happen because Acts 6 servant-leaders multiplied until there were people ready to go.

7. THE RESULT

- a. What happened when the apostles released ministry to the people?
- b. **[13] "So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith." — Acts 6:7**
- c. That word "So" is doing significant work.
 - i. It's causal.
 - ii. And you might easily miss it unless you slow down and realize that
 - 1. Because of this —
 - a. because of the release, the equipping, the trust, the commissioning —

- iii. the word of God spread and the disciples multiplied.
- d. And then there's that detail about the priests.**
 - i. The very people who had most consistently opposed the movement of Jesus.
 - ii. The ones with the most to lose by converting —
 - 1. the status, the power, the institutional authority, the identity built entirely around the old system.
 - iii. Even they were coming to faith!
 - iv. Think about what it cost them.
 - 1. To join the movement they'd tried to silence.
 - 2. To be led, in some ways, by the very laypeople they'd looked down on.
 - 3. That would have required remarkable humility.
 - 4. And they paid an extra price for it —
 - a. Likely losing social standing,
 - b. losing the network,
 - c. stepping down from the top of the religious hierarchy to become disciples of the crucified Jesus of Nazareth.
 - v. You know you're onto something when even your most committed opponents eventually join you.**
 - vi. Why?
 - 1. Because the church was functioning as God designed it.
 - 2. Leaders equipping.
 - 3. Members ministering.
 - 4. The whole body doing its work.
- e. Acts 6 is one of the hidden hinge points in this entire story of Acts.
- f. The chapter begins with a complaint and ends with multiplication —
 - i. because leaders released ministry instead of controlling it.
 - ii. And regular people said yes.
- g. And the road kept moving them forward.
 - i. Jerusalem was being reached.
 - 1. Soon Judea. Then Samaria. Then the ends of the earth.
 - 2. We'll be studying that catalytic event next Sunday as Effie preaches!
 - ii. And the engine of all this advance wasn't a handful of gifted leaders carrying everything.
 - 1. It was a whole church where every member was a minister.

8. APPLICATION

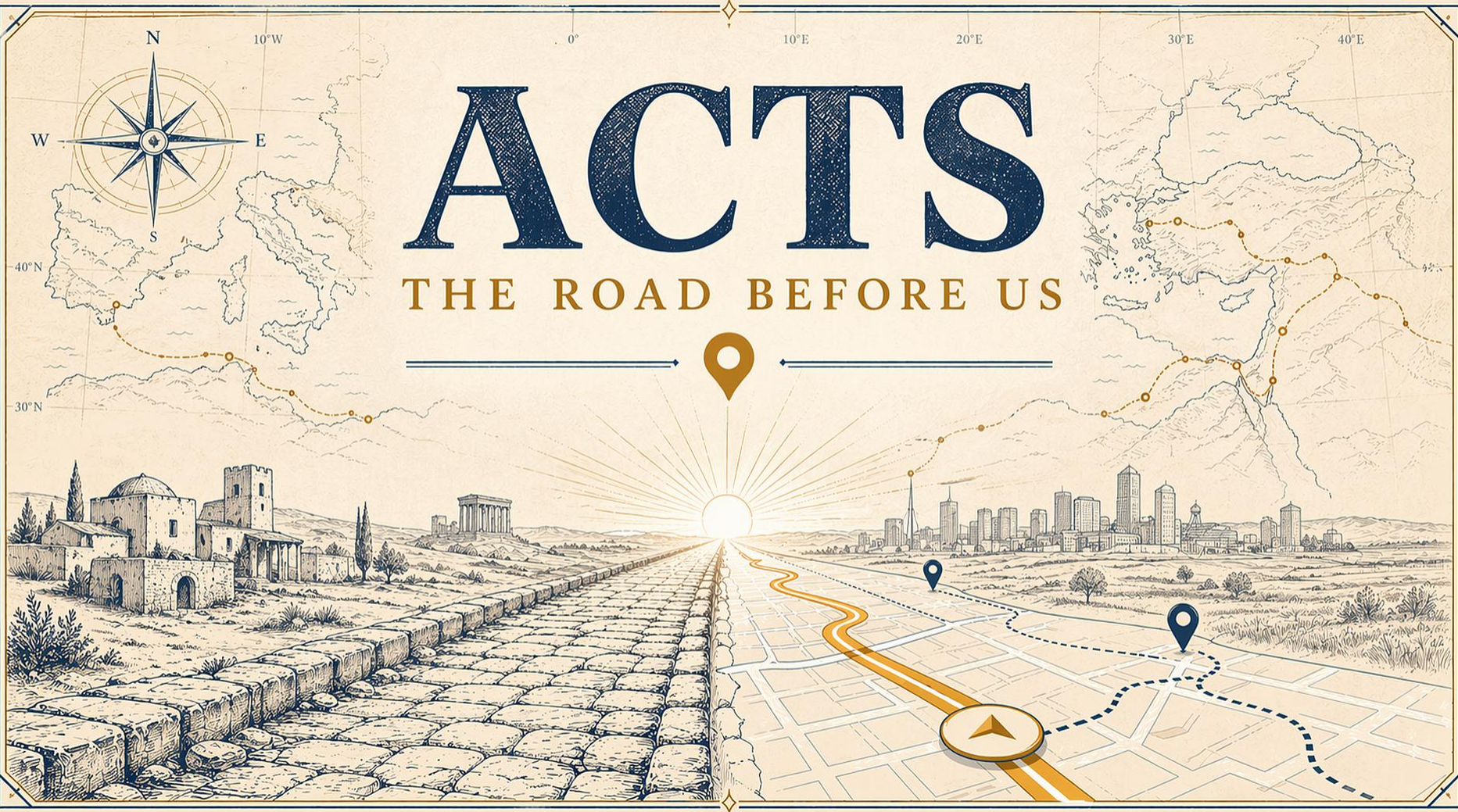
- a. Two application questions for each of you:
- b. **[14] First: What ministry is God calling you into that you haven't stepped into yet?**
 - i. Maybe you've been waiting until you feel qualified.
 1. Waiting for more experience, more confidence, more time, less chaos in your life.
 - ii. The seven weren't chosen because they were famous.
 1. They weren't chosen because they'd earned a platform or proved themselves on a big stage.
 - iii. They were chosen because they were FAT
 1. Faithful. Available. Teachable.
 2. The kind of people I'm looking for here,
 - a. Regular people willing and ready to be raised up.
 3. Acts 6 is exactly where this idea comes from.
 - iv. Maybe God is inviting you to take a next step right now.
 1. To lead through serving
 2. To disciple someone one-on-one.
 3. To step into a LIFE Group
 4. To help lead one you're already in
 5. To organize care for a family in need.
 6. To help in children's ministry or youth ministry.
 7. To take ownership of something new you keep noticing that nobody's doing.
 - a. THE SPIRIT IS NUDGING YOU
 - v. **Don't wait for perfect. Start faithful.**
- c. **[15] Second: Who are you intentionally developing?**
 - i. Not just who are you helping — but who are you entrusting?
 1. Releasing? Investing in?
 2. **Who are you letting try, letting fail, and helping grow through it?**
 - ii. **Because every disciple is called not just to follow Jesus themselves**
 1. **But to help others follow Him.**
 - iii. Church, we are looking for people like these seven.
 - iv. I believe God is already raising them up in our midst.
 1. Some of you are living this right now —
 - a. and we see you, and we're grateful.

2. Some of you haven't started yet, and this morning might be the beginning.
 3. Some of you are ready for a next step you've been putting off for too long.
- d. As we release more people into the work of ministry,
- i. **the church becomes less dependent on a few people and more dependent on Jesus.**
 - ii. The ministry expands.
 1. The gospel advances.
 2. People meet Jesus.
 3. And disciples multiply.
- e. [16] And that roadmap of Mission keeps moving forward.
- i. Not because a few people did more —
 - ii. but because the whole church became what God designed it to be.
 1. A people where every member is a minister.
 2. A people where leaders equip and release.
 3. and the mission keeps moving.
 - a. From St. George and Manhattan and Wamego —
 - b. out into to Riley and Pottawatomie Counties
 - c. Farther out into the rest of Kansas
 - d. — and all the way out into the ends of the earth.

9. PRAY

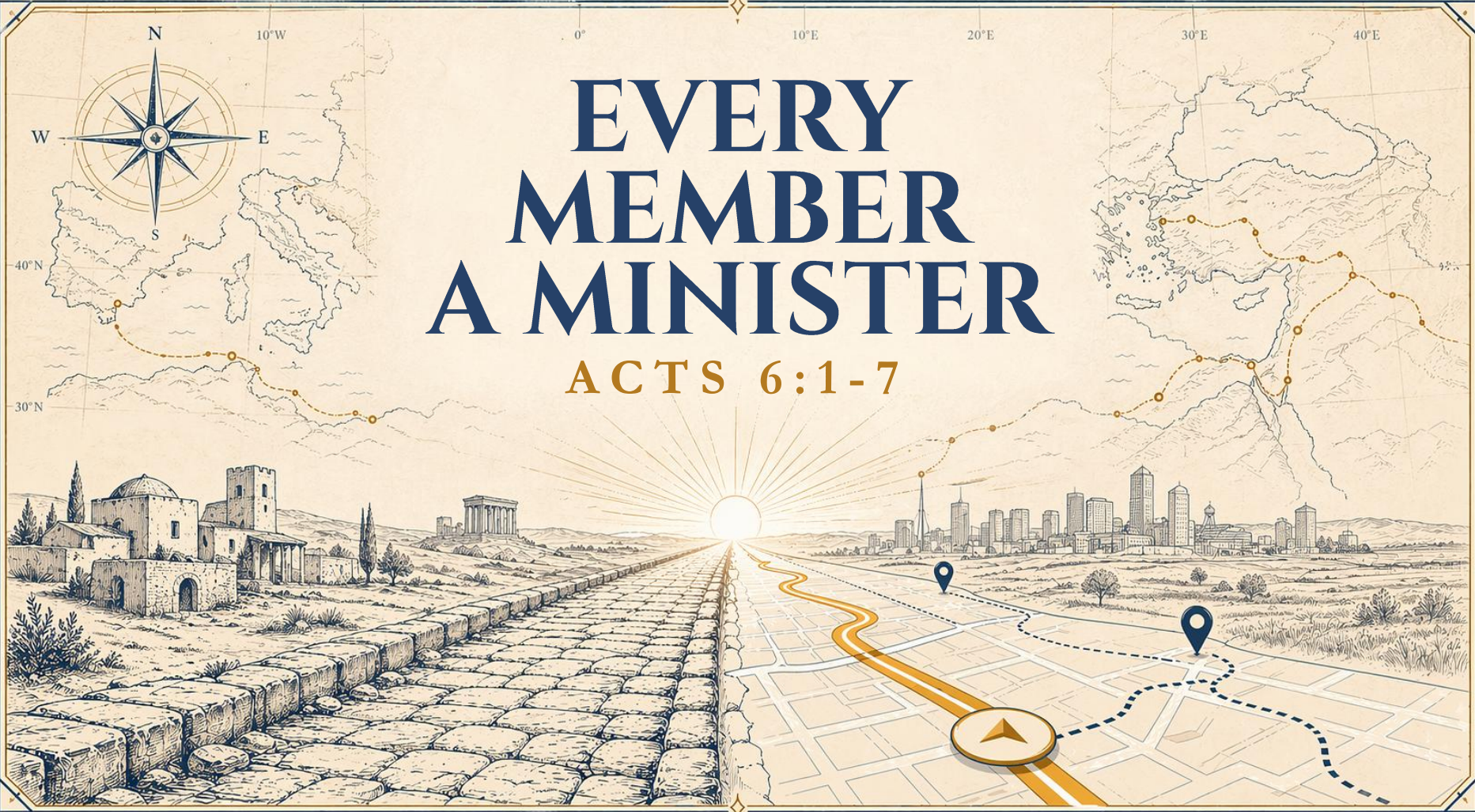
ACTS

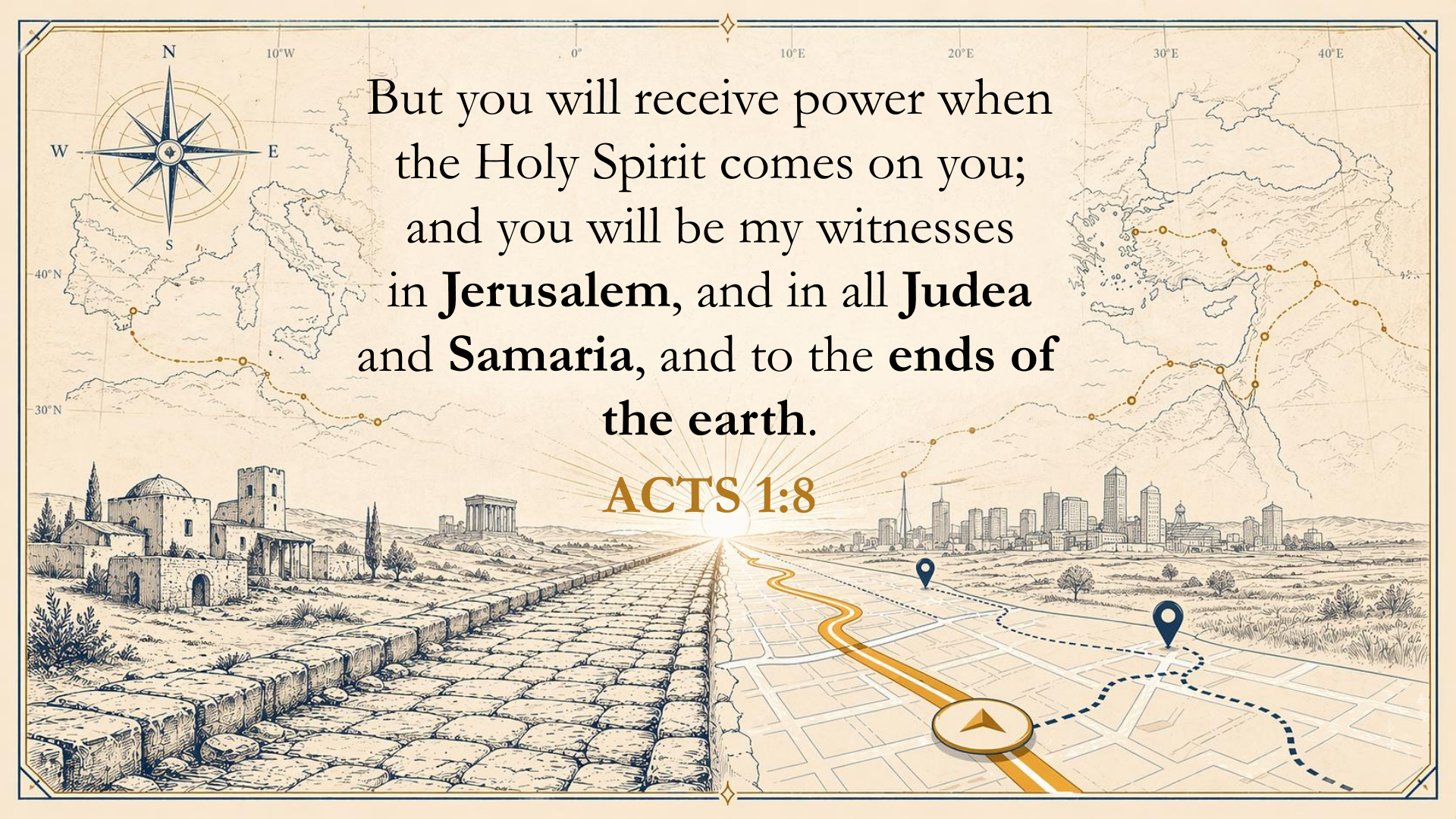
THE ROAD BEFORE US



EVERY MEMBER A MINISTER

ACTS 6:1-7





But you will receive power when
the Holy Spirit comes on you;
and you will be my witnesses
in **Jerusalem**, and in all **Judea**
and **Samaria**, and to the **ends of**
the earth.

ACTS 1:8

THE FIRST GROWING PAIN

ACTS 6:¹ In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.



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KNOW YOUR CALLING

ACTS 6:² So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, 'It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. ³ Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them ⁴ and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.'



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EPHESIANS 4: ¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ... ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

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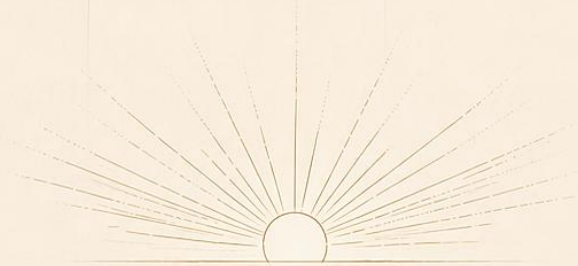
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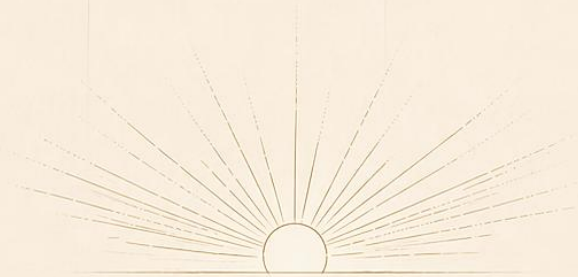
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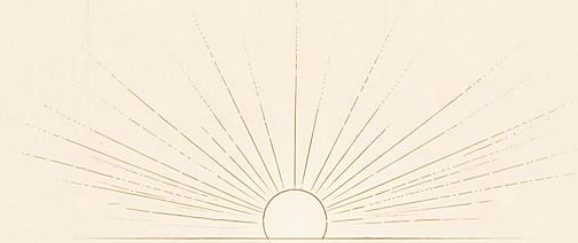
THE RESULT

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APPLICATION

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