

# ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

## 16 – Servants in the Kingdom

### Acts 6.1-7

Why talk about race?

1. The Bible talks about race – Acts 6, 10, 15
2. Our church is becoming more diverse – matters now and will matter in the future
3. The culture still reels from racial issues and “conversations” where you get labeled in a second and dismissed in a moment

### Two True Statements

*All Lives Matter*

- All lives matter because all lives are created in the image of God (Gen. 1.27)
- All lives matter because Jesus died to re-create them in salvation (John 3.16)

*Those experiencing injustice need our attention and compassion*

- If we see an older kid beating up a younger, a parent shaking a child, a person lying on the side of the road – we speak up, we do something (Prov. 31.8-9)
- If all lives matter, we give them the attention and compassion they need in the moment
- Let it be our reflex – entitlement, attention seekers, faux victims will be there, but let’s be close enough to be able to tell
- Do they deserve it? Who deserves compassion and mercy?

### Possible Responses

*Continued partiality*

- “Well, this is just the way I am” – you are just as guilty as if you’d committed adultery (James 2.1-13)

*Live in denial*

- “It’s 2018. That stuff doesn’t happen” – BARRY / LOUISVILLE SCHOOL
- “We’re in Houston. That stuff doesn’t happen” – do we genuinely value them?
- “If I’d been there...” – I cannot deal with my sin in the present by pretending I’d be different if I lived in the past

*Withdraw* – probably most common

- “It’s too big a problem, too hard an issue, too heated a topic, too complicated to understand, too personal, and I don’t know how to help or make a difference”
- Do no harm – can you imagine Peter saying this to the Hellenists?

- “Just preach the Gospel. The rest will take care of itself” – the Apostles thought this WAS a Gospel issue
  - It reflected the Gospel (Ephesians 2.11-16)
  - It furthered the Gospel (John 17.20-21)
- Passivity / Inactivity  $\neq$  “love your neighbor”

### *Be Colorblind*

- “I’m judging based on the content of their character, not the color of their skin”
- Judging based on character is good – not seeing them for who they are is bad
- God is NOT colorblind
  - He intentionally created people of different colors
  - He intentionally re-creates people of every color
    - Not a single type of person that God saves but ALL types of people He saves
    - Revelation 7 – white robes (new person) from every tribe (new people)

### *Be Servants*

- Servants with Character – marked and stained by Jesus
  - What kind of character? Galatians 5 (a book about how the Gospel deals with race within the church)
- Servants with the Spirit – led by God and hear His Word
- Servants with Wisdom – knowing how to respond to the difficulties posed by the world and by the religious
  - Compelled by the Spirit and armed with wisdom, these men of character began to serve the very people who were causing the problem in the first place! They were already recognized as servants – paying attention and showing compassion
- Kingdom servants serve EVERYONE
  - The result was not only meeting of needs (that people got what they needed) but multiplication happened in the church (v.7)
  - Our willingness to serve everyone directly impacts the advance of the Gospel in our area

So what do we do?

- Calibrate to paying attention and showing compassion
  - If God continues to send people our way, we will be ready – SATELLITE

Questions for Discussion:

1. How would you describe the cultural situation in regard to race today? How have you personally seen or experienced racial issues? What is the worst example of racial issues or tensions that you have personally seen or heard?

2. Reread the story in Acts 6.1-7. Imagine for a moment that the apostles had not addressed the issue head on as they did. Name 3-4 outcomes that you can imagine would have happened as a result. How does this affect your understanding of the need to speak up on issues like this?
3. Out of the four *unhealthy* responses, which are you most likely to identify with? Why is that? How about those closest to you? Which do you see most in your social circles?
4. Read Ephesians 2.11-16. How does Paul describe the work of Jesus in uniting people in Christ? What do you see in the Scripture that you can apply this week in your relationships (whether cross-racial or not)?
5. In the sermon, Trent referenced servanthood as, at the least, being willing to pay attention to people and show compassion to them. What situation is in your life right now that needs your attention and compassion? How can the group pray for you to serve in that situation?