

Week of May 20-26

NECESSITY IS...

Scripture Reading: Read Acts chapter 6

One of my family's favorite magazines when I was growing up was Readers' Digest. I still remember my father practicing words with me that he learned from a feature in the magazine known as Word Power; words like discombobulated, plethora, or prodigious. Points to Ponder and Quotable Quotes were two other sections that were well-read in our home. There is something about a pithy statement, a maxim or well-written quote that stands out and can be easily remembered.

The title of today's devotional is part of one such statement. Can you finish the quote by the Greek philosopher, Plato? Necessity is...the mother of invention. Plato meant that a need will often encourage creative efforts to solve the problem.

In our chapter reading today, the church is confronted with a need; a need that threatened to harm the unity of the church and rob it of its most powerful witness...love for another. What was the problem? Growing pains and, what appears to be, underlying prejudice. In the first few chapters of Acts, we witness thousands of people coming to faith in Christ. One of the ways the church helped one another was to provide a daily distribution of food to their widows who could not support themselves. A problem erupted when the Greek-speaking Jewish widows were being overlooked in the daily feeding by the Hebrew-speaking Jews. Historically, the Jews in Israel who spoke Hebrew had a tendency to look down on the Greek-speaking Jews, believing them to be compromisers. Apparently, coming to Christ didn't stop the underlying prejudice!

It was a serious problem that had to be addressed if the church was to continue growing and moving forward. Up to this time, the 12 apostles did everything in the church. They taught, oversaw the distribution (Acts 4:37), led ministries, administered discipline, etc. Over time, however, the needs of many outweighed the apostles' ability to handle the load. By the time we reach Acts chapter 6, necessity demanded a solution and became the mother of invention. The apostles decided to delegate and enlarge the leadership team so they could focus on the Word of God and prayer as spiritual overseers. They wisely asked the church to choose seven additional folks to oversee the distribution rather than choose for them, a proposal that was met positively by the church. Seven men were chosen (all Greek names, by the way, probably indicating they came from the group that had been neglected), and, then, prayed for by the apostles and released to do ministry.

So, what was the result of the "birth" of this new team of leaders? See for yourself in verse 7: "*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.*" Looks like "mother necessity" produced a healthy "baby." What do you think?

Action Step & Prayer Focus: "Insanity is doing the same thing in the same way and hoping for a different result." God doesn't want us living like that so he allows needs to come our way to drive us to our knees in order to discover a new way of doing things. Do some reflecting in your life to determine if necessity has to mother some creative new ways to living out your faith. Pray accordingly as the Lord reveals his plan to you.

Take-a-way: *Father God uses needs to mother new ways of doing life in Him.*