

Gratitude Amid the Grind

The Gospel in Motion

[Acts 6:1-7](#)

This Sunday's scripture passage from Acts 6 marks a transition from the events that have taken place in Jerusalem - Peter and John's run-ins with the Sanhedrin - to now the wider world. Our passage finds the church with its first internal conflict on record: as the church has grown, the distribution of food to the widows has become disproportionate, with more going to the Aramaics than the Greeks.

This ethnic/linguistic issue springs up as a result of this community of difference becoming one. When confronted with the issue of food distribution, the apostles suggest appointing folks to take on this responsibility - the origin of what we know as our deacon ministry. Luke, the author of Acts, could have just as easily glossed over this event of "grumbling" and reported only the positive news of the church's growth and flourishing. This perspective harkens back to two passages ago in Acts, when, even after flogging and imprisonment, "they (Peter & John) rejoiced that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name" (Acts 5:41). Our first instinct is not usually to thank God in the middle of our trials. **Have you had experience being able to thank God in the midst of trials? How did it affect the process?**

When we are able to find thankfulness to God amidst the hard things, as Allen explains, it makes God aware of our ability to admit things are hard. While optimism is admirable and helpful, failing to confront the difficulties in our lives can lead to suppressing anger and sadness, which are often hard to handle. A step, Allen suggests, is practicing gratitude. Gratitude reminds us that we called to something way bigger than just ourselves. **When we're engaged in a more grateful way of living, how will we naturally thrive more? Why do you suppose we are called to give thanks to God when He really doesn't need it?**

As we walk into Thanksgiving week, may we be poised to offer "gritty" thanks, as the apostles did, amid whatever ups and downs the holiday might bring. In doing so, may we remember that gratitude is what God wills for us and the sake of our communities. As Allen suggests, ponder the God who made you, who keeps you, and who is in your life even when you don't notice. To help answer this question, **1) write thank you notes, and/or 2) keep a gratitude journal.**

