SEA CHANGE CHURCH

THE CURRENT

The Church Has Left the Building · S1E1

Courage Leaves the Building

A 7-Day Study

"Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, 'It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.' And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking."

Acts 6:1–10 ESV

Pastor Adam Stadtmiller · July 26, 2026

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE

"But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking."

Acts 6:10

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

Each week, The Current walks through a piece of Sunday's passage: a short verse study, encouragement, journal questions, and a daily prayer.

Take one day at a time — there's no need to rush.

DAY 1

Ordinary People, Extraordinary God

> **ACTS 6:1 ESV**
>
> *"Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution."*

VERSE STUDY

The church in Jerusalem was growing. More people were putting their faith in Jesus every week, and by any measure, that's good news. But growth doesn't mean everything gets easier — it often means something that was hidden gets exposed. As the number of disciples increased, so did the pressure on how the community cared for its own people, and a real, legitimate complaint surfaced: widows from one group were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

It would be easy to read this as a story about a church problem. It's really a story about a church that was honest about its problems while it was still growing. God didn't wait for Jerusalem to get everything right before He kept adding to their number. He was moving in the middle of the mess, not after it was cleaned up.

This is also where the sermon's big idea starts to take shape: the expansion of the church was never going to depend on a handful of extraordinary leaders standing at the front. It depended — and still depends — on ordinary people saying yes to God right where they are: business owners, homemakers, servants, mentors, hosts, neighbors. Nobody in this story is famous yet. That's the point.

TAKE HEART

If something in your life or your community feels unfinished or exposed right now, that's not proof God has stepped back. Growth and mess often show up together, and God is fully capable of moving in both at once.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. Where do you see God at work in your life right now, even in the middle of something that still feels unresolved?
2. Is there a need nearby — a person, a gap, a 'widow being overlooked' — that you've noticed but haven't done anything about yet?

DAILY PRAYER

Before you pray, spend a few quiet minutes with today's verse — read it slowly once more, or simply sit in silence and let it settle. Then, when you're ready, pray this over your day:

Lord, thank You for moving in my life even when things around me feel unfinished or messy. Give me eyes to see the needs that are easy to overlook, especially the ones right in front of me. I don't want to wait for everything to be perfect before I pay attention to the people You've placed nearby. Make me honest about what isn't working, without losing sight of how much You are still doing. Give me the courage to notice, and then the willingness to act. Amen.

ACTION CHALLENGE

Name one overlooked need in your church, workplace, or neighborhood, and take one small step toward it this week.

NOTES

DAY 2

The Threat Within

> **ACTS 6:2 ESV**
>
> *"And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, 'It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables.'"*

VERSE STUDY

As the Jerusalem church grew, it faced two very different threats: opposition from the outside, and division on the inside. This passage is about the second one — and it's worth noticing how directly the apostles dealt with it. They didn't get defensive about the complaint, and they didn't brush it aside as a minor issue. They called the whole community together and named the problem plainly.

Just as important is what the apostles admitted about themselves. They didn't try to do everything. They said, in effect, 'we can't serve tables well and stay devoted to prayer and the word — something has to give.' That's not an excuse; it's honesty about limits. Strong leadership here didn't look like doing it all. It looked like knowing what only they could do, and being willing to say so out loud.

Unity in a growing church isn't the absence of conflict. It's what happens when conflict gets named quickly, taken seriously, and handled with humility instead of defensiveness or delay.

TAKE HEART

Naming a limit isn't failure. It's often the most honest and most useful thing a person can do for the people around them.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. When conflict or a legitimate complaint shows up in your community, do you tend to address it quickly, or let it sit?
2. What's one limit you need to admit today so someone else has room to help carry the load?

DAILY PRAYER

Before you pray, spend a few quiet minutes with today's verse — read it slowly once more, or simply sit in silence and let it settle. Then, when you're ready, pray this over your day:

Lord, give me the courage to deal with conflict honestly instead of avoiding it or getting defensive. Help me see complaints and hard conversations as opportunities to protect unity, not threats to my pride. Show me where I'm trying to carry more than I was ever meant to carry alone. Give me the humility to admit my limits out loud, and the trust to let others step in where I can't. Thank You for the people You've placed around me to share the load. Amen.

ACTION CHALLENGE

Identify one thing you're currently trying to handle alone, and ask someone specific for help with it this week.

NOTES

DAY 3

Chosen for the Table, Not the Stage

> **ACTS 6:3 ESV**
> *"Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty."*

VERSE STUDY

The solution to the church's conflict wasn't a new program — it was seven specific people, chosen by the community, to do a very unglamorous job: making sure widows were fed and cared for. This wasn't a stage role. There was no applause built into serving tables. And yet this is exactly the assignment the apostles asked the whole congregation to take seriously enough to choose their best people for.

Think about what it means that men described as 'full of the Spirit and of wisdom' were asked to do something that offered no recognition. In most systems, you earn your way up by starting at the bottom — you learn the whole operation from the ground floor before you're trusted with more. Scripture doesn't shy away from that pattern here. Being entrusted with something small and hidden was the proving ground, not a demotion.

Before this week goes any further, it's worth asking the honest question the congregation was effectively asked: would you be willing to take the lowest job available, if your church needed it and no one applauded you for it? That question, more than talent or charisma, is what qualified the seven.

TAKE HEART

God doesn't waste hidden faithfulness. The willingness to do the unnoticed job well is exactly the kind of character He builds on.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. Would you be willing to take the least visible job in your church or community if it were genuinely needed?
2. What's one practical, unglamorous need you could quietly meet this week without needing anyone to notice?

DAILY PRAYER

Before you pray, spend a few quiet minutes with today's verse — read it slowly once more, or simply sit in silence and let it settle. Then, when you're ready, pray this over your day:

Lord, I confess I want to be noticed, and that desire can get in the way of simply serving where I'm needed. Teach me to value hidden faithfulness the way You do, even when no one is watching or applauding. Give me a willing heart toward the tasks that don't come with recognition. Remind me

that You see what's done in secret, and that it matters to You. Make me the kind of person who says yes to the small assignment, not just the visible one. Amen.

ACTION CHALLENGE

Volunteer for one unglamorous, behind-the-scenes task this week — cleanup, a meal, an errand — without mentioning it to anyone.

NOTES

DAY 4

Full of the Spirit and of Wisdom

> **ACTS 6:5 ESV**
>
> *"And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch."*

VERSE STUDY

Seven names are listed here, and outside of Stephen and Philip, Scripture barely mentions the rest of them again. That's not an accident worth glossing over — it's the whole point. Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus served faithfully in a role most people would forget, and their names are still recorded in Scripture two thousand years later, even though we know almost nothing else about them.

Notice, too, what qualified them: character, not charisma. They were chosen for being full of faith, full of the Spirit, full of wisdom — not for talent, connections, or a résumé. And this wasn't a decision handed down from leadership alone; it 'pleased the whole gathering.' The congregation affirmed the choice together, which meant the community itself was doing the discerning, not just the twelve.

You don't need a famous name or a public platform to be significantly used by God. Most of the people God has used throughout history to change things are people whose names history never bothered to record.

TAKE HEART

If your faithfulness feels unseen or unremarkable, you're in good company. Most of what God has used to build His church was done by people whose names we'll never know this side of heaven.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. Who is someone in your life who serves faithfully without much recognition — and have you told them it matters?
2. What does being 'full of the Spirit and of wisdom' look like practically in your everyday responsibilities this week?

DAILY PRAYER

Before you pray, spend a few quiet minutes with today's verse — read it slowly once more, or simply sit in silence and let it settle. Then, when you're ready, pray this over your day:

Lord, thank You for the reminder that You don't need a famous name to do something significant through a person. Grow in me the kind of faith and wisdom that doesn't depend on being noticed. Bring to mind someone who serves faithfully without recognition, and give me the words to thank

them specifically. Help me measure my life by faithfulness rather than visibility. Let my character, not my platform, be what You build on this week. Amen.

ACTION CHALLENGE

Find and thank one specific person in your life who serves faithfully without much recognition.

NOTES

DAY 5

Devoted to Prayer and the Word

> **ACTS 6:4,7 ESV**
> *"But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." … "And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith."*

VERSE STUDY

The apostles' solution wasn't to abandon serving altogether — it was to get specific about what only they could do, and release the rest to people who were equally equipped for it. They didn't say serving tables was beneath them; they said it wasn't their particular assignment. Staying devoted to prayer and the word was their lane, and they stayed in it.

What happened next is worth sitting with: 'the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly.' Not just attendees at a gathering — disciples. The result wasn't incremental, it was exponential, and it happened because responsibility was shared rather than hoarded. Even priests, who would have had every religious reason to resist this movement, became obedient to the faith.

There's a pattern here for any of us carrying more than we should: when you stay devoted to the one or two things only you can do, and trust others with the rest, the impact multiplies far beyond what any one person could produce alone.

TAKE HEART

Releasing responsibility isn't giving up on something — it's often the exact thing that allows God to multiply it.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. What is the one thing right now that only you can do — and what could you hand off to someone else?
2. Where have you seen God multiply the impact of something once responsibility was actually shared?

DAILY PRAYER

Before you pray, spend a few quiet minutes with today's verse — read it slowly once more, or simply sit in silence and let it settle. Then, when you're ready, pray this over your day:

Lord, help me get clear on what You've specifically called me to devote myself to, so I stop spreading myself thin on everything at once. Give me the trust to release tasks to others instead of holding onto control. I want to see multiplication, not just maintenance, in the places You've placed me. Remind me that shared responsibility isn't a loss of ownership — it's how Your church

has always grown. Use my faithfulness in my lane to make room for greater impact than I could produce alone. Amen.

ACTION CHALLENGE

Hand off one task this week to someone else, freeing yourself to focus on what only you are positioned to do.

NOTES

DAY 6

Courage Leaves the Building

> **ACTS 6:8-9 ESV**
>
> *"And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen."*

VERSE STUDY

Stephen didn't stay behind the tables. The same man chosen for the hidden, practical work of serving widows is now described as full of grace and power, doing wonders and signs among the people — and then he goes out into the public square, into the places where the debates of the day were already happening, and engages them there.

It helps to picture what that public square actually was: an open forum where people gathered to argue out the pressing issues of the day, in public, in front of anyone listening. Stephen didn't avoid that space or wait to be invited. He walked into it. His faithfulness in the unnoticed role prepared him for courage in the exposed one — the private work came first, and it's what made the public work possible.

This is the shift the whole passage is building toward: faith that starts at the table doesn't stay at the table. It moves from your heart, to your home, to your church, and eventually out into the world — the fourth corner, the place where it costs something to be known as a follower of Jesus.

TAKE HEART

Hidden faithfulness isn't the opposite of courage — it's usually the thing that produces it. God equips before He sends.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. Where is your 'public square' — the place you're most tempted to go quiet about your faith?
2. What would one small act of courage look like there this week?

DAILY PRAYER

Before you pray, spend a few quiet minutes with today's verse — read it slowly once more, or simply sit in silence and let it settle. Then, when you're ready, pray this over your day:

Lord, give me the same courage Stephen had to carry my faith beyond places where it's easy or safe. Show me where I've been staying quiet when You're actually asking me to speak up or show up. Let the faithfulness I've practiced in private become the foundation for courage in public. Remove the fear of being disputed with or misunderstood, and replace it with confidence that

comes from You, not from winning an argument. Send me into my own public square this week with grace and power, not fear. Amen.

ACTION CHALLENGE

Have one honest, unhurried conversation about your faith with someone outside your church community this week.

NOTES

DAY 7

The Wisdom They Couldn't Withstand

> **ACTS 6:10 ESV**
>
> *"But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking."*

VERSE STUDY

Stephen's opponents came ready to argue, and they lost — not because Stephen was the most clever debater in the room, but because what he carried wasn't his own. The wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke were more than a match for anyone trying to out-argue him. This is the payoff of everything the week has traced: an ordinary man, faithful in an unnoticed role, devoted to the Spirit, willing to go public, now speaking with a wisdom nobody could withstand.

It's worth remembering how this all started: a complaint about neglected widows, a decision to choose seven ordinary people, a willingness to serve tables with no applause attached. None of that looked significant at the time. But it built the kind of person the Holy Spirit could use in the most exposed, high-pressure moment of his life.

This is the whole arc of the passage in miniature: an ordinary person, an ordinary opportunity, an ordinary step of obedience, and an extraordinary God who does the rest. That's how the church left the building in the first century, and it's still how it happens now.

TAKE HEART

You don't need to win every argument or have every answer. The same Spirit that gave Stephen unshakeable wisdom is available to you in whatever you're facing this week.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. Looking back over this week, what's one ordinary step God asked of you — and did you take it?
2. Who is one person you can encourage, serve, invite, or tell about Jesus in the days ahead?

DAILY PRAYER

Before you pray, spend a few quiet minutes with today's verse — read it slowly once more, or simply sit in silence and let it settle. Then, when you're ready, pray this over your day:

Lord, thank You for showing me this week that faithfulness in small, ordinary steps is exactly what You use to do extraordinary things. I don't need to be the most impressive person in the room — I need to be full of Your Spirit and willing to obey. Give me wisdom that isn't my own when I face opposition or hard conversations. Bring to mind the person You want me to encourage, serve, invite, or tell about Jesus this week. Keep me faithful in the ordinary so You can do the extraordinary through it. Amen.

ACTION CHALLENGE

Take the church's spiritual gifts assessment this week, and identify one specific person to encourage, serve, invite, or tell about Jesus.

NOTES

MEMORY VERSE

“But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.”

Acts 6:10

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