Bible teacher Kent Hughes wrote of an African woman who became a remarkable witness after her conversion at the age of 70. She was blind and uneducated with enough hardship to make survival a challenge, but she wanted to tell people about Christ. She asked the missionary to mark John 3:16 with red ink in her French Bible. The woman then sat in front of a boys’ school when classes dismissed each day. When she heard boys near her, she would ask if they could read French, which was an esteemed status. One or two boys would proudly respond and she’d invite them to read the highlighted verse. She would then ask if they knew what it meant. That led to conversations and conversions. The missionary chronicled **two dozen** of those boys later became pastors because of that woman’s witness. God has declared a ripe harvest for those **who are willing to let Him bear fruit through them**. ( *Preaching The Word: Colossians*, Kent Hughes, 2013, p.252 )

Only the Lord knows how much can be accomplished if we are submitted to His Lordship and are willing to do what we can in service. We are talking about deacons. Deacons are servant leaders in the church. We are all servants in Jesus’ name. Deacons are part of the church leadership program laid out in the Bible. Deacons are leaders who serve and servants who lead.

There is debate about whether or not the origin of deacon ministry is found in Acts 6. I believe it is the origin of what grew and developed into deacon ministry.

The verb ***Diakoneo*** is first found in the NT in Matt 20.28. Note that the noun, ***Diakonos*** is found in Matt 20.26. This passage is worth a quick look . . .

What does the word deacon actually mean? ***Diakonos*** - one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master, a servant, attendant, minister —

1a) the servant of a king;
 1b) a deacon, one who, by virtue of the office assigned to him by the church, performs various ministry services;
 1c) a waiter, one who serves food and drink (*Thayer’s Grk Lexicon* ).

The full meaning and understanding of what ‘deaconing’ is in the NT comes from looking at the passages where the noun and verb are used. We will get more into that next week. So, to get started, let’s look at our passage for this morning. We are looking at Acts 6.1-7. We will use 4 headings to organize our thoughts : The Call for Deacons, The Character of Deacons, The Commission of Deacons and The Consequences of Deacons.

**I. THE CALL FOR DEACONS (1-2)**

 A. Growth

 *as the disciples were increasing in number*

 B. Grumbling

 *there arose a complaint*

  C. Grappling

 1. Summoning the congregation

*summoned the whole company of the disciples*

 2. ‘Splaining their position

 *‘It would not be right for us to give up ... to wait on tables*’

 3. Suggesting a plan

 ‘*select from among you seven men … whom we can appoint over this duty’*

 D. Greatness

 *this proposal pleased the whole multitude*

Long before the era of Michael Jordan with six NBA titles in the 1990s, the Chicago Bulls faced a few challenges under their very first coach, Johnny Kerr.  They had lost seven games in a row so Kerr decided to give a psychological pep talk.  He looked around the locker room and told Bob Boozer to pretend he was the best scorer in basketball.  He told Jerry Sloan to pretend he was the best defensive guard in the NBA.  Guy Rodgers was to pretend he was the best at running offense and Eric Mueller should pretend he was the best center in the league.  The Bulls lost by 17 points.  While Kerr was trying to figure out what happened after the game, Mueller put his arm around Coach Kerr and said, “**Don’t worry about it, coach.  Just pretend we won**.” (*Preaching The Word:Phil-Ph, Hughes,290)*

The Apostles didn’t pretend there wasn’t a problem. They addressed it. The issue was solved. Growth and ministry continued. It called for deacons. There was a need for service in the church. There was a need for ‘deaconong!’

 **II. CHARACTER OF DEACONS (3-4)**

 A. Discipleship

 *among you*

 B. Devotion

 *of good reputation*

 C. Dynamism

 *full of the Holy Spirit*

 D. Discerning

 *full of Wisdom*

 E. Dutiful

 *appoint over this duty*

**III. COMMISSION OF DEACONS (5-6)**

 A. Pleasing

 *this proposal pleased the whole company*

 B. Placing

 *they chose … had them stand before the apostles*

 C. Praying

 *[the apostles] prayed*

 D. Passing

 *laid hands on them*

**IV. CONSEQUENCES OF DEACONS (7)**

 A. Spreading the word

 *so the word of God spread*

 B. Skyrocketing numbers

 *the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly in number*

 C. Surprising results

 *and a large number of the priests became obedient to the faith*

While *serving* as Facebook’s COO, Sheryl Sandberg wrote *Option B,* a best-selling book that chronicles her grief journey after the sudden death of her husband Dave in 2015. Like so many before her, Sandberg discovered that *serving* others is an important part of the healing process – both in receiving it and giving it. During an interview with Clay Scroggins about the resilience she’s developed from her great loss, she noted that there are **huge self-help sections** in bookstores, but **not any “help-others sections**.” She went on to say that rather than making excuses as to why we can’t offer help, we need to “kick the elephant out of the room **and just show up**.” If we want to follow Christ’s example of *serving* others, it starts by first of all showing up (*Fight For It: How To Build Resilience, North Point Church, 5/8/19*).

Sheryl and that blind African lady teach us how much can be accomplished if we just show up and do what we can do in Jesus’ name. Only eternity will reveal how much can be accomplished if we are submitted to His Lordship and are willing to do what we can in service.

We have different gifts. We have different experiences. We have different personalities. The Lord puts us in different positions in the body. We all have our jobs to do. Let’s make sure we show up and do our part in Jesus’ name. We all have opportunities. Let’s make the most of them.