



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

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## A Complaint Arose

by Frank Himmel

"Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food" (Acts 6:1).

Complaints at church are nothing new. They have been around as long as the church has because the church is people, and people tend to complain. Some complaints are legitimate and constructive: they point out real problems and lead to resolutions and better performance. Others can only be described as petty gripes. It would be instructive for all of us to look at how this first complaint was handled.

### **What Was Not Done**

Before we examine what was done, consider what was not.

#### **No one quit.**

That sometimes happens. Brethren become disenchanted over some circumstance and quit. We call it quitting the church, but it is really quitting the Lord. What does that say about one's commitment, his discipleship? A friend of mine calls it getting mad at your brother and taking it out on your Father.

#### **No one went to another congregation.**

In this case they couldn't because there was no other congregation. This was not just the only one in Jerusalem, it was the only one anywhere! And I can't help but wonder if that wasn't in one regard a blessing. While there is much to be said for having several churches in an area, one drawback is that it gives folks an option they would not otherwise have - to run away from problems instead of working them out. That solves nothing.

**No one started a move to fire the preacher or oust the elders.** It is uncertain whether Jerusalem had elders at this time. The apostles were in the lead. The brethren duly respected them. They did not attribute sinister motives. There were none of those privately circulated surveys or petitions, no secret meetings, nor a so-called "vote of confidence." No one tried to use irrelevant matters such as Peter's personal weaknesses or Matthew's former occupation as a means to discredit them.

No one quit, no one split, no one pitched a fit! If only brethren today would abandon these unfruitful practices.

### **What Was Done**

Actually, the solution to this complaint was quite simple. First, the apostles gave it an objective hearing and found it valid. Leaders must be listeners. As is usually the case, no purposeful wrong had been intended, it was just a simple oversight.

The apostles responded promptly, not allowing the problem to fester. They instructed the congregation to select some qualified men whom they could put in charge of the task. Seven were appointed. They must have done their jobs because this problem is never mentioned again.

How easy. How productive. How worthy of our imitation.

## To Trade A Feeling

By Adam Delk

Have you ever heard someone say —“I wouldn’t trade this feeling I have in my heart for a stack of Bibles” or something like that? Many may use expressions like this to explain the depth of their personal assurance of salvation. This assurance is based upon feeling. With an expression like this, a feeling is superseding all other things and making them secondary. The Bible should be the sole source of our assurance of salvation. I wouldn’t trade that assurance for any feeling. The Bible contains promises of God, of which there is nothing more sure. God cannot lie (Heb. 6:18). Furthermore, he is completely capable of keeping all the promises that He has made (Rom. 4:21). God’s word and power are absolutely dependable. God makes a promise in relation to our salvation that is recorded in Mark 16:16, and this promise too cannot fail.

What about feelings? Feelings as we can all observe through the mere living of life can deceive. The Bible also shows us areas in which good, conscientious people were deceived by their feelings. It is also worth note that the Bible clearly indicates that these people would not have been saved due to good intentions, consciences, or feelings but rather through obedience and righteousness. Saul of Tarsus felt that he was doing the right thing (Jn. 16:2 and Acts 26:9-11) as he persecuted Christians and compelled them to blaspheme. He was fervent about what he saw as his duty to God saying in Acts 26 that he “was exceedingly enraged against them” speaking of followers of Christ. Saul must have felt quite good since he was a leader among his contemporaries in advancing what he felt was right (Gal. 1:14). We can also see that the people of Matthew 7:22 had feelings that deceived even though they felt everything was alright because they prophesied and did many wonderful works.

Today we have to be careful to distinguish what is truth and what is just a feeling. Many people in today’s religious world promulgate the idea that each individual’s feelings are truth for that individual. We first have to understand that truth is an absolute in any realm of life. If we base truth on different individuals, it is no longer absolute.

In our day, as in many times in the past, preachers have a forum in which they can influence many people. Unfortunately, that influence is not always for good. Preachers and other seemingly righteous people can pervert the word of God (Matt. 7:15) and often times lead others astray. Truth and error cannot be determined on the basis of a person’s wonderfully worded prayer, attractive personality, or ability to quote scripture. These things may very well be sheep’s clothing. Be sure to never rest your assurance or faith on people or feelings. They can disappoint. The rock that will never disappoint is Jesus and the inspired message and deliverance of the Good News that is provided for us. It is ultimately our own responsibility to hold up our faith against the truth that God has revealed in His word and confirm that our life conforms to His will. The assurance of the Bible is even greater than the word of angels (Gal. 1:8).

Feelings are wonderful things that God has given us. It is our duty to allow them to prevail in the right situations and allow them to be overridden at the proper time. A feeling will never get you to heaven. Obedience to God’s will give you access to the grace of God that saves souls. This is the only way. The Bible is the word of God. Its commands are to be obeyed, its promises believed, and its assurance accepted. This is faith.

The Bible is the standard and all other standards will fail. Live your life in daily confirmation that your faith rests on the rock that will forever stand and don’t trade that for a feeling.

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