Dare To Be Like Barnabas!

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday December 13th, 2020

Text: Acts 4:36-37

### Intro

1. The world is full of those who will discourage you and try to turn your hearts from the Lord.
2. Christians are to encourage one another, and especially those who are weak and struggling.
   1. I Thess. 5:11: Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.
   2. I Thess. 5:14: We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.
   3. Heb. 3:13: But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
3. Barnabas was a Christian, an encourager, and a gospel preacher of the first century.
4. He has been described as Paul’s “sidekick,” as he is often overshadowed by Paul.
5. There are several excellent lessons to be drawn from the life of this oft-overlooked servant of God who was known for offering encouragement!
6. Dare to be like Barnabas!

# Barnabas, the Encourager

* 1. First introduced in Acts 4:32-37:
     1. One of the earliest Christians – mentioned shortly after Pentecost.
        1. An apparently wealthy man – He sold land and laid the money at the apostles’ feet (Acts 4:36-37) – setting an example.
        2. Unlike the rich young ruler (Matt 19:16-22; Lk 18:18-23).
           1. This man allowed his possessions to take higher priority than God.
           2. Barnabas was sharing with poorer Christians (Acts 4:32-37).
        3. Contrast Barnabas with Ananias & Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11).
           1. They sold land, lied about the amount, wanting the praise of men.
     2. A Jew and a Levite.
        1. All priests were Levites *(from Kohath, one of Levi’s sons, from whom Moses and Aaron descended – Num. 4:1-20).*
        2. Not all Levites were priests. They did lesser temple work *(sons of Gershon and Merari – Gen. 46:11; Num. 4:21-49).*
     3. Originally known as Joses (KJV/NKJV) or Joseph (NASB).
        1. Apostles called him Barnabas, which means “Son of Encouragement.” (NKJV, RSV, NIV, NASB).
        2. “Son of Consolation” (KJV); “Son of Exhortation” (ASV).
        3. Must have been known for his effort and skill along this line!
     4. Was from Cyprus (Acts 4:36), an island in the Mediterranean, where the Romans had sent a large contingent of Jews.
        1. As a Levite, Joseph would not have owned land in Canaan for the Lord was to be the portion of the Levites, but the exile changed all that for they were no longer in Canaan!
        2. How or why he obtained the land, we do not know.
        3. Cyprus was known for its rich copper deposits and its timber, which made it a commercial target throughout history.
        4. The first Christians fled to Cyprus because of the persecution of the early church after the death of Stephen (Acts 8:1-4; Acts 11:19-20).
        5. Barnabas, Mark, and Paul began their first missionary journey by stopping at Salamis, the largest city of Cyprus on the east coast of the island (Acts 13:4-5) then made their way to the capital city of Paphos where they taught the gospel to the Proconsul there, Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:6-12).
        6. After the split between Paul and Barnabas, Barnabas took John Mark and returned to Cyprus to do missionary work there (Acts 15:39).
        7. Mnason, an early Christian, was from Cyprus (Acts 21:16).
        8. Later, Paul sailed past the island twice (Acts 21:3; Acts 27:4).
  2. Barnabas was bold and well respected (Acts 9:26-28):
     1. Saul, after conversion, came to Jerusalem but the church didn’t want to receive him. *They were afraid of him.*
     2. He took Paul to the apostles and vouched for him and Paul was received!
     3. When all were in doubt about Paul, Barnabas showed him kindness and sought to gain the others’ approval of Paul as well. He was an encourager!
  3. He was a “Good Man” (Acts 11:22-24):
     1. He was a good man, full of faith and full of the Holy Spirit.
     2. One of 3 in the NT called a “good man:” Jesus *(Jn. 7:12); Joseph of Arimathea (Lk. 23:50)*
     3. He lived up to his new name by encouraging others *(Acts 11:23).*
     4. He was successful in his preaching *(Acts 11:24).*
  4. Application:
     1. Whether times are good (right after Pentecost in Acts 4:32-37) or when times are stressful or even discouraging (right after the death of Stephen and persecution of the church in Acts 8:1-4 & 11:19-20, 23) we ought to encourage others! *(2020 has been a year of stressful times with the Pandemic)*
     2. There will always be the detractors who are ready and willing to discourage but you, YOU be the encourager! (Eph. 4:29; Col. 3:8)
  5. Dare to be like Barnabas and encourage people through the good times and the bad!

# Barnabas, the Bold Teacher

* 1. When a congregation was established in Antioch among the Gentiles, Barnabas was sent by the church at Jerusalem to encourage the new congregation *(Acts 11:19-24).*
     1. He encouraged them to remain true to the Lord, and “considerable numbers were brought to the Lord.”
     2. Acts 11:25-26: While in the work, he went to Tarsus and found Paul, brought him back to Antioch and they worked together there for a year, “and taught considerable numbers.”
        1. Disciples of Christ were first called Christians in Antioch! (Acts 11:26)
           1. “Called” is a Greek word *(G5537)* that means “divinely revealed,” or “called or revealed by God.”
           2. Christian was the name given by God!
     3. Antioch was called the “Heathen Queen” of the East.
        1. That makes it more amazing that it became such a central hub for Christianity, and the spread of the gospel.
     4. Notice that Barnabas is leading and developing Paul. He had been friends with him since *Acts 9:26-28* when he vouched for him at Jerusalem.
  2. The Antioch congregation decides to send financial relief for Christians during the famine in Judea.
     1. The congregation sent the money with Barnabas and Paul, who brought it to the elders (Acts 11:27-30).
     2. Barnabas was highly trusted and respected.
  3. The Holy Spirit calls upon Barnabas and Paul for preaching work in the first missionary journey *(Acts 13:1-3ff).*
     1. Hear the boldness of Barnabas at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:14, 45-52).
        1. Acts 13:46-47: Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES, THAT YOU MAY BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH.'”
     2. Contrast Barnabas (Acts 14:8-15) and Herod (Acts 12:20-23).
        1. The people at Lystra “began calling Barnabas, Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker” (Acts 14:12)
        2. Greek: Zeus (Roman: Jupiter) was the chief god, while Hermes (Roman: Mercury) was the herald, or a messenger.
        3. When called a god, Barnabas and Paul set the people straight!
        4. When Herod was called a god, he took the credit for it, and paid the price of death for taking the glory.
  4. When Judaizing teachers attempted to bind circumcision on Christians, Barnabas speaks with Paul and Peter to correct this *(Acts 15:12).*
     1. Having settled this problem in Jerusalem, the church there sent a letter to Antioch, Syria and Cilicia by the hands of Barnabas and Paul and others to clarify this issue *(Acts 15:22ff).*
  5. Paul and Barnabas split up after preaching more in Antioch and got into a contention over Barnabas’ cousin, John Mark, who had started on the First Missionary Journey but quit at Pamphylia (Acts 15:36-41).
     1. Paul goes on with Silas.
     2. Barnabas heads to Cyprus with John Mark.
     3. ***This is the last we read of Barnabas in Acts.***
     4. They work separately, but Luke follows Paul, thus so does the narrative in Acts
     5. Barnabas takes John Mark to Cyprus, his old home, where somewhere along the way John Mark learns his lesson and later becomes useful to Peter *(I Pet. 5:13)* and to Paul *(Col. 4:10; II Tim. 4:11; Philemon 1:24).*
        1. John Mark has long been identified as the author of the Gospel of Mark!
     6. It is sad to see friends who have been so much to each other have an argument so fierce they separate, and part ways.
     7. Paul later reconciled with John Mark *(Col. 4:10; II Tim. 4:11; Phil. 1:24).*
  6. Application:
     1. Christians are called, the “Lord's bond-servant” and are told to be “able to teach” in II Timothy 2:24-26.
     2. Even if you are not as good at it as some others (as Barnabas’ skill took a second seat to Paul) you can still be an effective teacher with practice!
     3. You can teach by your example and encourage others wherever you go!
  7. Dare to be like Barnabas and boldly teach and encourage others!

# Barnabas, the Faithful Example

* 1. Generosity – *Acts 4:36-37*
     1. Unselfishness: left wealth and became a preacher.
  2. Trusting – *Acts 9:26-28*
     1. Trusted Saul when others didn’t.
  3. Humble – Acts 14:8-15: contrasts well against others of his time.
     1. Rich young ruler *(Mt. 19:16-22) –* Unable to part with possessions
     2. Ananias and Sapphira *(Acts 5:1-11)* – Lied about gift for praise of men
     3. Herod *(Acts 12:20-23)* – Accepted praise of being a god
  4. Was a teacher and preacher – *Acts 11:22-24; 15:39*
     1. Was one of the first to take the gospel to the Gentiles.
     2. He taught and preached all over the Roman world!
  5. Was an encourager – Acts 4:36; 11:23
     1. Known for his encouraging words, he was named, “Son of Encouragement.”
        1. He encouraged & built others up in a time where persecution could easily discourage and distract saints from serving God!
  6. Application:
     1. You can influence others by your faithful example!
     2. Romans 12:4-8: Whatever skill or ability for the Lord you have, use it to the best of your ability and make use of opportunities!
     3. You can serve, teach, encourage, be generous, be diligent and cheerfully show mercy! *In all of this you can teach and encourage others by your example!*
  7. Dare to be like Barnabas in being an example of a faithful servant of God in using your gifts to the best of your ability!

##### Conclusion

1. Let’s not overlook or forget about Barnabas, and the work he did for God and for Paul.
   1. He used his abilities to build up and strengthen saints & Paul.
   2. He stands for all time described as a “good man” by the Holy Spirit!
2. Barnabas fills the early part of the book of Acts and it was the apostles who changed his name to “Son of Encouragement!”
   1. His role was one of teacher and preacher but he was known for his encouragement: to the first Jewish converts, to the early Gentile converts, and to the apostle Paul, with whom he was friends with, and closely worked!
   2. He serves as a role model for all Christians, and he must have been a joy to have around!
3. Do you use the talents God gave you to the best of your ability?
   1. ***Be faithful, humble, generous, able to teach, and encourage others!***
4. Dare to be like Barnabas and encourage others to remain true to Christ!
5. If you are not a Christian, now is the time to obey the gospel. Repent & be baptized!
6. If a Christian not living as you should, make the needed corrections! Be encouraged to repent and be restored!
7. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!