

Barnabas – A Good Man

Acts 11:24

Introduction

I. Let us turn in our Bibles to Acts, the 11th Chapter.

- a. **Acts 11:19** takes us back to **chapter 8: verse 4**, where the church was scattered after the death of Steven.
 - i. Those who were scattered abroad during the time of persecution that arose at the death of Steven traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, but they preached only to the Jews at first.
 - b. After a time, some of the men, particularly men from Cyprus and Cyrene, began preaching to the Gentiles also. **(Verse 20)** The 1st place where they did so was in Antioch of Syria.
 - i. The Bible makes it clear that Peter was the 1st to preach the gospel to Gentiles **(Acts 15:7)**... Therefore the preaching referred to here took place after Peter's sermon to Cornelius.
 - c. The Lord blessed the work of these men here though (Verse 21), and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.
 - d. The report of this success came to the ears of the church back in Jerusalem, so the brethren there sent Barnabas to Antioch. **(Verse 22)**
 - e. **(Verse 23)** When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged all the new converts to remain faithful and continue with the Lord, remaining true to Him.
 - f. But notice what Luke records concerning the character of Barnabas in **verse 24... READ!!** "...he was a good man".
 1. What an honor to have bestowed upon Barnabas. The Holy Spirit inspired Luke to write about how Barnabas was a "good man". God, in His written word... thought enough about Barnabas to describe him as a "good" person.
 2. Wouldn't you like that said about you? I sure would...
- II. So what I'd like for us to consider today is a character study on this man named Barnabas. What can we see in the scriptures that would suggest why it is that God saw fit to call him "good"?
- a. And what qualities within Barnabas should we seek to emulate?
 - b. Are there any qualities that we should abstain from?

(Let us examine what the Bible has to say concerning this man Barnabas, and let us draw some applications to our lives by first examining the text in which he is introduced...)

BODY

I. **Barnabas is introduced to us in Acts, chapter 4**

- a. In Acts chapter four, we read of how the earliest subjects in the new kingdom of Christ had a feeling of love and generosity toward one another.
 - i. **Read Acts 4:32-35**

- ii. Now, this was an unusual time in Jerusalem. Many Jews had come there to keep the feast of Pentecost. While they were there, many learned of Christ and His kingdom and therefore became members of the church.
 - 1. These new converts to Christianity decided to stay in Jerusalem and continue learning from the apostles. So, a very real need arose to provide for the necessities of those who had traveled from far distances.
 - 2. This wasn't some commune where everyone just continued to share everything they had moving forward... but this was a specific time of need... and we do see an example of generosity and a willingness to share when the need arose. That's a good example for us.
- b. **Now Read Verses 36-37.** Now we meet Barnabas... only his name isn't Barnabas...
 - i. We find out here that this man... the man who was so generous... his name was Joses, (or Joseph).
 - ii. Here is a man... who is willing to make sacrifices... sacrifices concerning... his dwelling place... his money... He gave all of that up...
 - iii. You know, Jesus taught about that very same subject in **Luke 12:15-21 (JUST REF.)**
 - 1. Now, a Christian does not necessarily need to go and give everything he's ever earned away to the needy (*Peter told Ananias that he didn't have to do that in Acts 5:4*). But the point is... we do have an example given concerning material sacrifice here. Material sacrifice... and generosity. We see that Barnabas was very generous. He didn't *have* to sell his land... Nor did he *have* to give all of his money away... But he did.
 - a. And that brings us to our next point...
- c. There is a vivid contrast between the example of Barnabas and that that of Ananias and his wife, Sapphira. It seems as though they wanted the same kind of praise that was given to Barnabas, yet *they* wanted to *keep* the money for themselves. It may very well be that these two stories are placed side by side in order to show this contrast.
 - i. This example of contrasts is evident from other passages as well. While Jesus taught that we aren't to do charitable deeds so as to gain praise from men according to **(Matthew 6:1)**, John says that *sincere* efforts to glorify God cannot *help* but be noticed **(John 3:21)**
 - 1. Ananias and Sapphira wanted the praise without the sacrifice; whereas Barnabas was willing to make the sacrifice out of a true spirit of generosity.
 - a. Are we doing good deeds for show? ...Or because we want to glorify God & to truly help those in need?
 - 2. A genuine, sincere spirit of generosity - God says that it will profit a man's soul, and will provide blessings - **Proverbs 11:25, 22:9, Isaiah 32:8** (*different wording for various translations, but same concept*)
 - 3. *So, this good man made sacrifices, and was generous with his charitable deeds.*

II. Notice also from the text in Acts, chapter 4 that the apostles named this Joses “Barnabas”, (which is translated Son of Encouragement)

- a. The apostles... they said essentially, “Now *that guy* is encouraging”. I really do believe that says something about... his attitude.
 - i. Paul says that he sent Timothy to Thessalonica to be a teacher AND an ENCOURAGER...
1 Thessalonians 3:2
 1. (*Give different versions*)
 2. (*The original word there means to call near; or to be of good comfort*)
 - ii. Can others say that about us? Are we encouraging... or are we discouraging? I don’t know about you, but I know that I need to work on being more of an encouragement to others! ... Because, I want to be a “good man” in God’s eyes.
- b. Consider the evidence given concerning *how* Barnabas acted in his role as one who encourages...
 - i. **READ Acts 9:26-28**
 1. It had been three years since Saul left Jerusalem to persecute Christians. (**Galatians 1:18-24**). When he returned, he tried to associate with the brethren, but they were afraid of him. They didn’t believe he was really a disciple. Barnabas, however, spoke up... He spoke up, but notice...
 2. He didn’t say, “yeah... Saul has been doing *pretty good* lately, even though... well he did commit many of your friends to prison... even though he did cast his vote against many of your friends (and possibly family members) to be put to death... He’s been doing *pretty well, lately*.”
 3. No...! That is NOT what Barnabas said... he looked at the change that took place in Saul’s heart and vouched for the good that he had done... He spoke well of his brother! He sought to repair and strengthen his brother’s reputation.....! He focused on the good!
- c. How about when John Mark needed encouragement?
 - i. **READ Acts 15:36-39**
 1. This is the start of Paul’s 2nd missionary journey here. During their 1st journey, Paul and Barnabas had taken John Mark with them... only to have him depart and go home (**Acts 13:13**)
 2. No reason is given for why John Mark went home (there in that 1st journey), but Paul obviously did not think that it was a good one. People have reasoned that... maybe Barnabas was more understanding to John Mark because they were cousins (**Colossians 4:10**)... Maybe... (Idk about that)
 - a. But do we see that two Godly men could disagree sharply, and still remain godly men?
 - b. Paul, obviously felt that John Mark had some growing to do, whereas Barnabas was willing to work with him... he encouraged him and helped him to grow. I believe there is room for two lessons there... in how we treat people who need to grow. Sometimes they need to be challenged, sometimes they need encouragement. (**Expound briefly**)

- c. Barnabas though... He *was* the one who provided John Mark with a second chance... and encouraged him to grow.
- d. Remember that... Mark did continue to grow in his service to God. In Paul's last letter, he asks Timothy to bring Mark with him, "*for he is profitable to me for the ministry*" (**2Timothy 4:11**)
- e. Barnabas - A.K.A. Son of Encouragement.

III. Consider also that Barnabas Was... Dependable!

- a. ***In Acts 11:22-23***, (That's where we began our focus this hour) Barnabas was the one sent by the brethren in Jerusalem see about the situation in Antioch.
 - i. The church in Jerusalem would not have *just sent anyone* over to inquire about what all the other congregations were doing... Just so they could be "in the loop".
 - 1. They could have sent any number of brethren to do that.
 - 2. No, they sent a man who was good, full of the Holy Spirit and FULL of faith.
 - 3. Someone who saw the grace of God... someone who saw the good things happening there... who encouraged them all that with purpose of heart that they should continue in the Lord!
- b. ... When monetary relief was sent to Judea, Barnabas and Saul were involved with making sure that the work was getting done – first-hand. (**Acts 11:29-30; 12:25**). What that means, is that he could be trusted, and he was an *active participant in the work that needed to be done!*

IV. Barnabas Was Willing to Teach

a. **Acts 13:1, 7, 43, 46, 14:12, 15:12, 15:35, 36**

- i. Now, I understand that not all are teachers, **James 3:1-2**
- ii. But the thing is, I also understand that many people are capable of teaching... yet, they are not willing. If we are capable teachers, then why are we not willing?
- iii. At the very least, consider that Barnabas was not the "chief" speaker (**Acts 14:12**). Do your part. Fill your role to the very best of your ability. Understand also, that the teaching that took that took place within the 1st century... Teaching occurred in more places than just the synagogues. Be willing to evangelize... that's what Barnabas was doing!
- iv. The Lord calls Barnabas a good man, and one of the things he did was teach... and evangelize.
 - 1. Notice also that Barnabas was very passionate about the work of the Lord
 - a. According to what we read in **Acts 13:46**, while in Antioch of Pisidia Barnabas grew bold while speaking to the unbelieving Jews.
 - b. **Acts 14:14**, at Lystra he tore his clothes and cried out against those who sought to elevate both he and Paul to a status in which they were not!
 - c. In **Acts 15:2**, Barnabas had a large dissension and disputed with those who were in error doctrinally.
 - d. Again in **Acts 15:39**, there was the dispute of John Mark.

- e. These are important points to make note of (There are times in which God's people need to see their leaders express emotion)!

V. That said, consider also that Barnabas Was Willing to Yield

- a. I won't spent too much time here... but consider how things first began with the mention of Barnabas and Saul.

- i. **Acts 11:30, 12:25, 13:2, 13:7,**

- 1. In **Acts 13:9**, Saul's name is used interchangeably with the name Paul...
 - 2. Up until this point, the names are given as "Barnabas and Saul", indicating Barnabas was the more prominent character. From this time on in the New Testament, Saul is called Paul exclusively, and his name is usually listed first when it is joined with the name of a partner.

- ii. **Acts 13:43, 46, 50, 14:12**

- 1. I believe that this is a good lesson for us in that Barnabas did not feel the need to be at the center of attention. It wasn't the Barnabas and Saul hour... nor was it the Paul and Barnabas show!!
 - 2. Now that seems like a pretty simple thing... But do you realize that many brethren don't like it when others get attention for the good that they do? It happens... Maybe that is something that you struggle with.
 - a. Perhaps that is why James wrote to Christians about the willingness to yield, and putting away bitter envy and self-seeking in **James 3:13-18**.
 - b. Do you want God to call you good? Oh, brethren... How I long for that. I want that to be said of me... and I want that to be said for all of you! Consider the example and admonitions from God's word today.

Conclusion

- I. God calls Barnabas a "good man"!
 - a. I believe that is the ultimate compliment.
 - b. I would hope that we would all strive to be "good people"
- II. We see from the scriptures some very telling attributes of Barnabas... things that reveal his character...
 - a. He was a man who was willing to make great sacrifices
 - i. And that was not for show
 - b. He was very generous
 - c. Barnabas was an encourager!!
 - i. So much of an encourager that his name was changed because of it!
 - d. He was an active, dependable worker
 - e. He was a teacher
 - f. He was passionate about the Lord's work
 - g. He was also willing to yield

In giving the Invitation...

- I. I want for us to be reminded of the fact that, although Barnabas was a good man... But He was not perfect... He wasn't sinless.
 - a. In writing to the churches of Galatia, Paul said that he had to reprove Peter for acting contrary to what they both taught... which was that Jews and Gentiles were all one in Christ.
 - b. READ Galatians 2:11-13**
 - c. What we see in this text... is another good example for us to learn from.
 - d. Sometimes... good men make mistakes.
 - e. Sometimes, good men need to take correction.
 - f. Sometimes, good men need to take correction, and then make some corrections.
 - g. Sometimes, good men need to make things right, where they have stumbled. And that doesn't just hold true for men... but for women as well.
- II. *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" – Romans 3:23*
- III. There is only one man who has lived a perfect, sinless life, and that is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
- IV. *"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." - 1 Corinthians 5:21*
- V. **(Read Romans 6:1-6)**