

25-0511a Transcript

25-0511a - *Barnabas the Son of Encouragement, Part 1, Jim Lokenbauer*

Bible Readers: Kevin Woosley and Tom Freed

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Barnabas the Son of Encouragement, Part 1

Transcript (0:04 - 22:59)

Scripture Readings

1st Reader: Kevin Woosley

Romans 12:3-8

(0:04) The first scripture reading is out of the book of Romans, chapter 12, verses 3 through 8. (0:12) For I say, through the grace given to me to everyone who is among you, (0:18) not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, (0:25) as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, (0:32) but all the members do not have the same function. So we, being many, are one body in Christ, (0:40) and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that (0:49) is given to us, let us use them. If prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith. (0:57) For ministry, let us use it in our ministering. He who teaches in teaching, (1:03) he who exhorts in exhortation, he who gives with liberality, he who leads with diligence, (1:11) he who shows mercy with cheerfulness. (1:14)

2nd Reader: Tom Freed

James 1:16-18

(1:19) I'll be reading James 1, 16 through 18. (1:23) James 1, 16 through 18. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good thing given, (1:33) every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of light, with whom there is no (1:40) variation or shifting shadow. In the exercise of his will, he brought us forth by the word of truth, (1:50) so that we would be a kind of firstfruits among his creations. (1:55)

Transcript

Preacher: Jim Lokenbauer

(2:00) Good morning, everybody. (2:02) But this morning, I am going to be talking about encouragement. If you notice, (2:07) the scriptures that the men read this morning, and thank you for that, they all had to do (2:14) with gifts from God.

Our Lord Brother James tells us every good and perfect gift comes from God. (2:25) And even today, God gives us special gifts to each and every one of us. (2:33) It is up to us to find and utilize these gifts to help the church and to glorify God with.

(2:41) The particular gift from God that I want us to focus on, (2:47) that's mentioned by Paul in the Roman letter that was read, chapter 12, is encouragement. (2:55) So today, we're going to do a brief study of a man from the Mediterranean island of Cyprus (3:03) named Joseph. His nickname was Son of Encouragement.

Holy Spirit sanctified this man (3:12) for a special mission along with Saul, making them Holy Spirit's apostles in the establishment (3:20) of the first century Gentile church. And his gift was encouraging others. (3:29) We are first told about him in the fourth chapter of Acts, verse 36, which says, (3:36) So Joseph, who was called Barnabas by the apostles, which is translated Son of Encouragement, (3:45) he was a Levite of Cyprus by nationality.

So as a point of distinction, I don't think he's the same (3:53) disciple whose name was put forward along with Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot, because that (4:02) Joseph had an AKA, also known as Justice, which as far as I've read, has never been used by Barnabas. (4:11) Their names were similar, though. In Acts 1.23, it reads, (4:22) So they were similar in name, but not the same disciple.

Some people tried to say they were one (4:30) and the same, but they weren't. So this Joseph, whom we'll call Barnabas from this point forward, (4:36) was an encourager, which, again, was one of the gifts from God. (4:42) So we will read from Scripture how Barnabas used his gift to aid the saints.

(4:50) This isn't going to be an exhaustive study of Barnabas. We could spend literally weeks (4:57) on his life through Scripture, because the entire book of Acts, (5:05) you can find Barnabas through most of it. (5:09) But this will be just today's lesson and this evening's lesson on Barnabas.

(5:15) Someone who encourages is concerned for others and builds people up. That's a hard quality to (5:23) find today. The culture today is more concerned about taking selfies than to be concerned about (5:30) those around them.

They are selfish, full of the me, me, me mentality. We are in a generation of (5:39) narcissists. But someone who is an encourager has their outward focus going.

They're looking (5:47) for opportunity to help and encourage others. They put others first. Nearly half of the translations (5:58) today uses the word son of encouragement in the description of Barnabas.

Many of the translations (6:07) also use son of exhortation. Both of them work, and they come from Greek words, (6:16) parakaleo, to call near, that is, invite, invoke, implore, console, beseech, comfort, exhort, (6:24) entreat, or pray. And also the Greek word protrampo, which is to encourage or exhort.

(6:34) Exhorting involves direction and instruction, whereas encouraging is to build up. Matter of (6:42) fact, our English definition of encourage is to give courage to, to give or increase confidence (6:50) of success, to inspire with courage, spirit or strength of mind, to embolden, to animate, to (6:59) incite, to inspire. So from those definitions, we can tell Barnabas was a really positive guy (7:09) who builds people up, gives them direction, and gives them courage to serve God.

(7:16) We don't know when Barnabas became a follower of Jesus, but early on when the newly established (7:23) church was growing is when we first heard about him. So in Acts 4, 32 through 37, it says, (7:32) All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his (7:39) own, but they shared everything they had.

With great power, the apostles continued to testify (7:48) to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy (7:56) persons among them, for from time to time those who owned lands or houses, sold them, brought (8:03) the money from the sale, and put it at the feet of the apostles. And it was distributed to anyone (8:10) as he had need.

Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus whom the apostles called Barnabas, was also, which means (8:20) son of encouragement, sold the field he owned and brought the money and put it at the feet of the (8:26) apostles. Barnabas, as you could see, was all in for the Lord and his church. He sold property he (8:38) owned and willingly shared it with God's people who were in need.

He was contributing to the (8:44) success of the early church, and by his actions he refreshed others. He was using his gift of (8:53) encouragement generously to glorify God in his church. In chapter 9 of Acts, a Pharisee named (9:02) Saul, who would one day become a close companion of Barnabas, was on a personal mission to destroy (9:11) the Lord's church.

With the approval of the high priest, he went to Damascus to imprison believers (9:19) there. Along the way, Jesus appeared to him out of the sky in blazing light and told Saul what he (9:28) must do. Saul was blinded by the encounter and had to be led by the hand by his men to the city where (9:36) he fasted and prayed for three days.

A believer named Ananias was sent by Jesus to lay hands on (9:47) Saul and heal his blindness and to baptize him. What Saul was to become was revealed to Ananias (9:57) by our Lord. This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings (10:05) and before the people of Israel.

I will show him how much he must suffer for my name. (10:14) When you read in Galatians chapter 1, you read Paul's defense as being an apostle of the Lord. (10:22) By revelation, he received the gospel from Christ himself.

We are told that he spent three years in (10:31) Damascus before traveling back to Jerusalem. When Saul traveled down to Jerusalem, he tried (10:39) meeting up with the believers, but they were naturally afraid of him since he had dragged so (10:45) many off the prison and had some people killed. So Barnabas interceded on Saul's behalf and brought (10:54) him to the apostles.

In chapter 9 verses 26-31, it says, when he came to Jerusalem, (11:02) he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really (11:08) was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his (11:15) journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him and how in Damascus he had preached (11:22) fearlessly in the name of Jesus.

So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, (11:29) speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. He talked and debated with the Grecian Jews, (11:35) but they tried to kill him. When the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea (11:41) and sent him off to Tarsus.

And the church throughout Judea, Galilee, Samaria enjoyed a (11:48) time of peace. It was strengthened and encouraged by the Holy Spirit. It grew in numbers and living (11:57) in the fear of the Lord.

Did you notice the Holy Spirit also was credited as being an encourager? (12:06) That would make sense that Barnabas, who was full of Holy Spirit, was an encourager. So Barnabas' (12:13) gift is a

true fruit of the Spirit. A lot can be said of Barnabas from these verses.

(12:21) Barnabas was not fearful as the other Christians were. He showed love and empathy to Saul. He also (12:31) trusted in the Lord, showing great faith, and believed that Saul was indeed converted to (12:37) Christianity.

You could see it in the man. Isn't that one of the aspects of agape love (12:46) that this man Paul would one day teach to the Corinthians? Love is patient. Love is kind.

(12:53) It does not envy. It does not boast. It is not proud.

It is not rude. It keeps no record of wrongs. (13:01) Love believes all things.

Love never fails. So Saul experienced Barnabas' encouragement firsthand (13:11) and how happy he must have been when Barnabas took him under his wing and vouched for him before the (13:18) apostles. He was willing to risk his life and reputation to bring a man who was once (13:26) bent on the destruction of the church into the fold of the believers.

Saul's acceptance by (13:34) Barnabas, the apostles, and the rest of the church must have been like a healing balm (13:40) to Saul. Even though he would carry this guilt of what he had done to the church (13:47) in the past with him, he learned how to channel (13:50) those feelings as fuel to work even harder for the Lord. This shows us the amazing ripple effect (13:59) that encouragement can have, not just on individuals but on an entire church and community (14:07) as well.

After Stephen was martyred testifying about the Christ, a persecution started in (14:15) Jerusalem against the church. This caused many Christians to move out into the surrounding (14:22) cities. As they went, they spread the gospel.

In Acts 11, 19 through 26, we are told, (14:31) they therefore who were scattered abroad by the oppression that arose about Stephen traveled as (14:39) far as Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews only. But there were some of them, (14:48) men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, (14:55) preaching to the Lord Jesus. The hand of the Lord was with them in a great number believed (15:04) and turned to the Lord.

The report concerning them came to the ears of the assembly which was (15:11) in Jerusalem. So they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch, who when he had come (15:19) and had seen the grace of God and was glad, he exhorted them all, that's encouraging, (15:26) that with purpose of heart they should remain near to the Lord, for he was a good man, (15:33) full of the Holy Spirit and of faith, and many people were added to the Lord. Barnabas went out (15:41) to Tarsus to look for Saul.

When he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year (15:50) they were gathered together with the assembly and taught many people. The disciples were first (15:56) called Christians in Antioch.

So Barnabas was from the island of Cyprus, which is very close to Antioch, (16:09) which is in Syria. So he was very familiar with the people and their culture there. (16:15) That made him the perfect choice to verify the reports of the Grecian Gentiles (16:20) accepting the Lord and to strengthen the new converts there.

Antioch was the third largest (16:27) city in the Roman Empire, so there were many people there which they could preach the word to. (16:35) When Barnabas got there, he himself was glad and encouraged by observing the grace of God at work (16:43) and the Gentiles who repented of their sins and accepted Christ as their Savior. He exhorted them (16:53) to remain true to the Lord.

In a pagan city, he knew there were plenty of things that can draw (17:00) the new believers back into their old sinful life. Scripture says that Barnabas was a good man, (17:08) full of the Holy Spirit, and had a strong faith. Those characteristics are what kept him productive (17:17) for the Lord and effective for the Lord.

He taught and preached God's word to the Gentiles. (17:25) He was very fruitful, bringing many souls to Christ. His fruitfulness glorified God.

(17:33) Barnabas had to share his exciting news with his friend Saul, so he made a short trip north (17:40) to Tarsus and looked for him. And when Barnabas found him, he and Saul returned (17:46) back to Antioch and stayed there a year to teach the believers the gospel (17:54) and the preaching-teaching duo of Saul at that time and Barnabas was so effective, many people (18:03) were added to the church there. The people who came to believe in the Lord by these two men (18:09) were so well taught the way of the Lord that the convert's character reflected that of our Lord, (18:17) and they were mockingly called Christians by the non-believers.

But what a compliment that was. (18:26) Christians means little Christs, and so the people were mocking them, calling them little Christs. (18:34) What a beautiful thing, and it was because of Barnabas and Paul's efforts in Antioch.

(18:43) Another aspect of Barnabas' good character was his trustworthiness. At the end of Acts chapter 11, (18:51) we were told of a prophet named Agabus who prophesied by Holy Spirit that there would be a (18:58) worldwide famine. So those Gentile Christians in Antioch who had extra goods and money, (19:07) had such a loving spirit they wanted to help out those believers in Jerusalem who were affected (19:14) by the famine.

They trusted God and knew his will would be done in this matter, so they entrusted (19:23) Barnabas and Saul with the task of traveling all that way during a famine, a time of great need (19:31) and want with a large sum of money and food. And there was plenty of danger along that route. (19:40) The travelers faced robbers and murderers along the way on the best of days, but during a famine, (19:50) that made things even worse.

That made people desperate, but yet Paul and Barnabas were very (19:58) brave and trustworthy, and they got the job done. Barnabas and Saul successfully delivered (20:08) the relief package to the elders in Jerusalem. So Barnabas and Saul stayed on in service in (20:15) Jerusalem for a while, during which time King Herod started persecuting the church in Jerusalem.

(20:22) He had James, the brother of John, executed by beheading, and when he saw that it delighted (20:31) the Jewish leaders, he arrested Peter and had him put in prison to be executed. But his plans were (20:39) thwarted because the church was meeting at Barnabas' aunt's house, his Aunt Mary Mark, (20:47) where his cousin John Mark lived. And you can see that in Acts 12.12 and Colossians 4.10. (20:54) And they were in constant prayer to God on Peter's behalf.

So God sent an angel to bust him out of (21:02) jail, and the next day Herod commanded that Peter be brought out to be executed, but they couldn't (21:09) find him in prison. So Herod executed all

the guards instead. So after all his hard work of (21:18) executing people all day long, Herod needed a vacation.

So he went to his palace in Caesarea. (21:26) While there, the people of Tyre and Sidon, which are large cities near Caesarea, (21:32) they were dependent on King Herod for food. So they sought audience with him.

So he addressed (21:39) the people as he pompously sat on his throne, dressed in his finest royal garb, and he gave (21:48) them a speech. And after the speech, the people flattered him, shouting, this is the voice of a (21:55) God, not a man. And because Herod did not correct them and give glory to the true living God of (22:04) heaven and earth, an angel of God immediately struck him dead with worms.

Can you imagine? (22:13) I don't know what that would have looked like. (22:17) But I have a very active imagination, and it's not very pretty. (22:21) With the threat of persecution from Herod now over, Barnabas and Saul, along with John Mark, (22:31) went back to Antioch.

In the 13th chapter of Acts, we read of an important event that's going to (22:39) change their lives forever. We will examine what that is this evening. So right now I offer the (22:48) invitation.

If you have any need, come forward, let the church know, and we'll be honored (22:56) to pray for you. So come as we stand and sing.