

Barnabas, "A Good Man"

Introduction:

1. The Bible is "*the word of God*," Heb. 4:12. Being "*the word of God*," it is:
 - a. Accurate, for God "*cannot lie*," Titus 1:2.
 - b. Inspired of God, 2 Tim. 3:16.
 - c. All sufficient, 2 Peter 1:3.
 - d. A story of divine love, John 3:16,
 - e. Able to save, James 1:21; Acts 20:32
 - f. Age-lasting, Matt. 24:35; John 12:48.
2. The Bible contains, not only the amazing message of God which reveals unto us the plan of salvation; it is also contains a divine record of faithful servants of God who, though long since deceased, provide great encouragement and motivation for God's people today.
 - a. Illustrated by the great heroes of faith cited in Hebrews, chapter 11, and the application given in Hebrews 12:1-2. These verses inform us that we need to look back to those O.T. worthies, v. 1, and then we are to look to Jesus, v. 2,
 - b. Even as there are many Old Testament heroes of faith which serve to encourage us, there are also many New Testament heroes of faith whose example should encourage us as we strive to serve the Lord. Barnabas was such a man.
3. Lesson Title: Barnabas, "A Good Man."
 - a. Text: Acts 11:19-24.
4. Later, in our study, we will look at these verses in greater depth, but for now we simply focus on part of verse 24 regarding Barnabas, He was called "*a good man*."
 - a. The Bible, notwithstanding the fact that it is "*the good book*," and derives from One Who is infinitely good, does not often use the word "*good*" when describing people. Hence, when the **Bible** describes a person as being "*a good man*," you can be sure he qualified as a "*good*" Person.
 - b. Many years ago someone asked Cecil Willis to give a definition of "*humility*." Instead of giving a dictionary definition of the word, he simply cited the name of a brother whom he believed epitomized humility.
 - c. So it is with regards to the definition of a "*good man*," we begin by citing the name of a Bible character who epitomized the quality of goodness; thus the lesson title, "Barnabas, a Good man."

Discussion:

I. Basic Facts About Barnabas.

- A. His real name was Joseph, Acts 4:36.
 1. Called "Joses" in the KJV, but in marginal reference "Joseph" is given for his real name.
 2. Nicknamed by the Disciples, "*Barnabas*," which means "*son of consolation*," KJV, or "*son of encouragement*," NKJV.
- B. He was a Levite, Acts 4:36.
 1. Descended from the tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe under the Law of Moses.
- C. He was of the country of Cyprus, Acts 4:36.
 1. An Island in the Mediterranean Sea, northwest of Jerusalem.
- D. A cousin to John Mark, Col. 4:10 (NKJV).
 1. Mark, a son of the Mary mentioned in Acts 12:5,12.

II. But what are the Qualities that made him a "good man?"

- A. He was generous with his own possessions, Acts 4:32-37.
 1. A big contrast between Barnabas in these verses and Ananias and Sapphira in the verses which immediately follow! Acts 5:1-4.
- B. He was willing to "stick his neck out" for "the underdog."
 1. Acts 9:26-27.
 2. Paul wanted to identify with the church at Jerusalem, but he had a terrible past history! Acts 7:58; 8:1,3; 9:1; 26:9-11.
 - a. And now, Acts 9:26, he wanted to be a part of the very people whom he had so severely persecuted!
 - b. They wanted no part of him, but Barnabas knew of his conversion, and "went to bat" for him.
- C. He was a great encourager of others.
 1. Acts 11:19-24.
 2. "*The church*" sent Barnabas to Antioch, who upon seeing "*the grace of God*," evidenced by the existence of these new converts:
 - a. "*Was Glad*," v. 23. He was not envious of the success of others!

- b. He exhorted the saints “*with purpose of heart*” to cleave unto the Lord.
- 3. The reason why he so responded:
 - a. “*He was a good man,*” v. 24, one:
 - (1) Whose steps are ordered by the Lord, Ps. 37:23.
 - (2) Who guides his “*affairs with discretion,*” Ps. 112:5.
 - (3) Who obtains favor of the Lord, Prov. 12:2.
 - b. “*Full of the Holy Spirit,*” v 24. Cf. Acts 6:3; Gal. 5:22-23.
 - c. Full “*of faith,*” Acts 11:24.
 - (1) Doubtlessly had a deep faith in God, Heb. 11:6, in Jesus Christ, John 8:24, and in the power of the gospel, Rom. 1:16.
- D. He worked with others, Acts 11:25-26.
 - 1. No doubt, he realized that he needed help in this important work.
 - 2. He went to Tarsus in search of Saul, found him, brought him back to Antioch, and:
 - a. “*Much people were added to the Lord,*” Acts 11:26; cf. Acts 2:47.
 - b. No doubt, their influence is what helped the church at Antioch to be such a center for evangelism (remember, Paul went out from Antioch on each of his three “missionary journeys.”
- E. He was trustworthy, Acts 11:27-30.
 - 1. When brethren call upon a person to be responsible for their money, or the money they have contributed, they select a person whom they believe to be honest and trustworthy. Barnabas, along with Saul, was selected for this purpose.
- F. He was willing to “*go preach!*”
 - 1. Mark 16:15-16.
 - 2. Acts 13:1-4
- G. He was willing to take second place!
 - 1. When they embarked upon the first journey, they were described as “*Barnabas and Saul,*” Acts 13:2, but it was not long until they were described as “*Paul and Barnabas,*” Acts 13:43,46.
 - 2. It has been observed that a person can do a lot of good “so long as he is not worried about who gets the credit.” Barnabas was such a person.
 - a. It took an Andrew to bring Peter to Jesus, John 1:41, though Peter eventually overshadowed Andrew.
 - b. It took a Barnabas to speak up for Paul, though Paul eventually overshadowed Barnabas.
- H. He was willing to give a Person a Second Chance.
 - 1. Acts 13:5,13; 15:36-41.
 - 2. Granted, Mark was related to Barnabas, but his demonstrating his confidence in Mark was in keeping with his proven character.
 - a. Both Paul and Barnabas continued their work. Their personal difference did not stand in the way of their evangelism!
 - b. In time, Mark proved himself; Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11.
- I. He was willing to defend the truth.
 - 1. Acts 15:1-2.
 - 2. He was not of the persuasion that “it makes no difference what you believe so long as you are sincere.” He stood for the truth!

III. But Barnabas was not perfect!

- A. No one is! Rom. 3:23.
- B. On one occasion he was “*carried away*” with the hypocrisy of Peter and some others, Gal. 2:11-13, and Paul took them to task, Gal. 2:14.
 - 1. Knowing the character of Barnabas, you can be sure he made the necessary correction.

Conclusion:

- 1. For the reasons cited above, Barnabas is one of the most admired persons in the New Testament.
- 2. One preacher, years ago, mindful of the great influence of Barnabas, said “I hope that when I come to the end of my way and am lying in a coffin that my children can lean over into the coffin and say, ‘*For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit, and of faith.*’” But because of these qualities, I am confident that on that last day, Barnabas will hear the **Lord** say, “*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,*” Mat. 25:34.
- 3. Each one of us should strive to demonstrate the qualities of Barnabas; the information cited about him, like the Old Testament Scriptures, Rom. 15:4, was written “*for our learning,*” **and** imitation!

--Bobby Witherington

