

BARNABAS – SON OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Introduction

- 1) Each person possesses different abilities, temperament, and opportunities (Matt. 25:15)
- 2) We should strive to blend our talents together to accomplish God's work (Rom. 12:4-5)
- 3) A man named Joseph had a reputation that earned him a surname from Jesus' apostles (Acts 4:36)
 - a) They named him **Barnabas**, meaning son of encouragement/consolation/exhortation
- 4) There is always a need for Christians like Barnabas – he was “a good man” (Acts 11:24)

I) **Background of Barnabas**

- A) A Levite from Cyprus [island in eastern Mediterranean Sea] (Acts 4:36)
- B) One of the original 120 disciples? Converted on Pentecost? Converted soon thereafter? (Acts 1:15; 2:41; 4:4; related to John-Mark as a cousin Col. 4:10)
- C) An active and involved Christian – well-known to apostles (not in a corner or a do-nothing)

II) **Barnabas' Work of Encouragement and Exhortation**

- A) ***Benevolent with His Material Wealth*** (Acts 4:32-37)
 - 1) Not selfish or a lover of money (contrast with Ananias – 5:1f)
 - 2) Happily involved in the benevolent work of local church (encourage needy brethren)
 - 3) What is our attitude toward our wealth (Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 6:17-19)?
- B) ***Supported and Endorsed an Unpopular Christian*** (Acts 9:26-29)
 - 1) The brethren at Jerusalem were afraid of a new convert, Saul of Tarsus
 - a) He had a dangerous and deadly reputation; they did not extend fellowship to him
 - 2) Barnabas took Saul to the apostles and explained Saul's encounter with the Lord and his faithful preaching in the name of Jesus – Barnabas' word is *trusted!*
 - 3) We need to maintain a good reputation so that our word is trusted and encouraging
- C) ***Encouraging Growth among Brethren*** (Acts 11:19-26)
 - 1) Barnabas sent by the Jerusalem church to Antioch to encourage new brethren
 - 2) Built up new converts and saved more souls (good man – knowledge – faith)
 - 3) Are we encouraging growth and progress in the Lord's work, or are we a discouragement?
- D) ***Trusted Messenger*** (Acts 11:27-30)
 - 1) Trusted to deliver relief to brethren in famine in Judea; honest reputation before all
- E) ***Co-worker with Paul*** (Acts 13-15)
 - 1) Holy Spirit sends Barnabas and Saul on preaching journey (13:1-2) – worked well together
 - 2) Saul/Paul became the prominent leader of group (13:7-9, 13; 14:12)
 - a) Barnabas fulfills role of co-worker – help and support work done (very important)
 - b) Even called an apostle (14:4, 14) – meant in general sense of “one sent forth”
 - c) Barnabas would at times support himself with his own labor while preaching (1 Cor. 9:6)
 - 3) Worked in harmony (Acts 15:1-4, 12, 22, 35) until a sharp disagreement arose over taking John-Mark with them on their second missionary journey (Acts 15:36-39)
 - a) Paul refused to take him, while Barnabas is determined to take him along
 - b) They decide to peacefully go their separate ways in the work of the Lord
 - c) Barnabas returns with John-Mark to his homeland of Cyprus to work in the gospel

Conclusion

Barnabas did make serious mistakes – at Antioch even he was carried away with the hypocrisy of Peter and others concerning eating with the Gentile Christians (Gal. 2:11-13). Why did he compromise? Was he intimidated? Did he not want to oppose error and cause a “fuss”? Barnabas had to take heed against temptation, and so must we. Let us have the good qualities of Barnabas: encouraging, using our talents to build up one another and seeking to save the lost.